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Letter dated 13 July 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Please find attached the assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Slovakia in February 2007 (see annex). This assessment was prepared under my responsibility following consultations with the other members of the Council.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Peter **Burian**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 13 July 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Slovakia (February 2007)

Under the presidency of Ambassador Peter Burian, Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations, the Security Council engaged in an extensive programme of work. During the month of February 2007, the Council held eight closed consultations of the whole, one debate, three open debates and four adoption meetings. It adopted four resolutions and issued two presidential statements. In addition, the members of the Council agreed on the texts of eight statements to the press, which the President subsequently read out.

On 2 February, the President of the Council briefed the press on the agreed provisional programme of work of the Council for February 2007. The Presidency posted regular updates of the provisional programme of work on its website and gave informal briefings after each round of informal consultations to representatives of interested Member States that are currently not members of the Council.

Africa

Chad/Central African Republic/Sudan

On 27 February, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Hédi Annabi, presented the report of the Secretary-General on Chad and the Central African Republic (S/2007/97), which had been submitted in accordance with the request contained in a Security Council presidential statement (S/PRST/2007/2). The report contained the findings of the second multidimensional technical assessment mission, which had visited the region from 21 January to 6 February. In his briefing, the Assistant Secretary-General said that eastern Chad was facing a multifaceted security and humanitarian crisis. He informed the Council about options to address the crisis, focusing on the possibility of deployment of a multidimensional United Nations operation.

During the discussion, members of the Council noted with concern that the situation along the borders shared by the Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic continued to be unstable and posed a threat to the safety of the civilian population, particularly for people in camps for refugees and internally displaced persons. They discussed the deployment of an advance mission to Chad and the Central African Republic and expressed readiness to consider modalities for the deployment of a multidimensional presence in eastern Chad and the north-eastern Central African Republic with the consent of the two Governments. The members of the Council underlined that, with regard to the challenging environment, the multidimensional United Nations operation would have to be effective. They also noted that it was necessary to count on full support and cooperation of the Governments in the region.

Côte d'Ivoire

On 9 February, the Security Council held informal consultations on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), Pierre Schori, briefed the Council on the recent developments in the country. He stressed that very little progress had been made in implementing resolution 1721 (2006) and stated that direct dialogue between the President of Côte d'Ivoire, Laurent Gbagbo, and the Secretary-General of the Forces nouvelles, Guillaume Soro, facilitated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), could open a window of opportunity.

After the informal consultations, the President delivered a statement to the press, in which the members of the Council commended Mr. Schori for the work accomplished as Head of UNOCI. They took note of the stalemate in the peace process and welcomed the commitment of Ivorian political leaders to engage in a dialogue and encouraged the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaore, in his capacity as the current Chairman of ECOWAS, to facilitate the rapid conclusion of an agreement.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 7 February, the Security Council held informal consultations on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, briefed the Council on the recent developments in the country. He informed the Council members about the progress made in the establishment of the governing institutions following the elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and also about the violence that had erupted in the province of Bas-Congo after local elections as well as about the fragile security situation in the eastern part of the country. He also informed the Council of the consultations with the Government on the post-transitional mandate of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

After the informal consultations, the President delivered a statement to the press, in which the members of the Council welcomed the formation of a new Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and encouraged it to tackle urgently the many challenges that the country continued to face. They also expressed their concern at the clashes reported in the province of Bas-Congo.

On 15 February, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1742 (2007), by which it extended the mandate and personnel strength of MONUC until 15 April 2007 and requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on his consultations with the Congolese authorities, including recommendations on possible adjustments to the mandate and capacities of MONUC, not later than 15 March 2007.

On 20 February, the Council held informal consultations on the sanctions regime in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Council heard a briefing by the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ambassador Jorge Voto-Bernales, Permanent Representative of Peru, on the work of the Committee. The Council also examined the interim report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo submitted pursuant to resolution 1698 (2006)

(S/2007/40). The Council decided to refer the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to paragraph 8 of resolution 1698 (2006) (S/2007/68) for the consideration of the Committee.

Somalia

On 2 February, the Security Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ibrahim Gambari, who informed the Council about the intention of the African Union to deploy a peace support mission to Somalia.

The members of the Council discussed the political, security and humanitarian situation in Somalia. During the discussion, they stressed the need for an all-inclusive political process in Somalia within the framework of the Transitional Federal Charter. They emphasized that it was essential to support immediate deployment of the African Union mission in order to stabilize the situation in the country. They also expressed their readiness to review the mandate set out in resolution 1725 (2006). The President read out a statement to the press after the meeting.

On 21 February, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1744 (2007), by which it authorized States members of the African Union to establish a mission in Somalia for a period of six months. It also requested the Secretary-General to send, as soon as possible, a technical assessment mission to the African Union headquarters and Somalia to report on the political and security situation and the possibility of a United Nations peacekeeping operation. Several delegations made explanatory statements following the vote.

Sudan

During informal consultations on 6 February, the Secretary-General briefed the Security Council on his talks at the African Union summit in Addis Ababa with several leaders of African countries. The conflict in Darfur was the main focus of concerns. The Secretary-General said that it was essential to support peacekeeping in Darfur and to convince the Government of the Sudan to accept the agreements reached in Addis Ababa on 16 November 2006 and in Abuja on the three-phase approach. He informed the Council about an agreement reached between the United Nations and the African Union to conduct a joint mission to the Sudan by two special envoys for Darfur, Jan Eliasson and Salim Ahmed Salim, to revive the peace process. The Secretary-General also informed the Council about his letter of 24 January 2007 addressed to the President of the Sudan regarding assistance to the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS).

The members of the Council welcomed the engagement of the Secretary-General in African issues, which represent a large part of the Council's agenda. They emphasized the need to obtain a genuine response from the Sudan on the implementation of the Addis Ababa and Abuja agreements.

On 8 February, in informal consultations, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations briefed the Council on the situation in the Sudan. His briefing focused on the progress in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the implementation of the three-phase approach of support of the United Nations for AMIS.

The Under-Secretary-General introduced the latest report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in the Sudan (S/2007/42). The Under-Secretary-General emphasized three areas that required sustained attention, namely, security matters; the issue of Abyei; and the forthcoming elections in the Sudan. He underlined the important supportive role of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan, and also briefed the Council on progress in assisting AMIS, in particular in the implementation of the light and heavy support packages and the planning of the hybrid operation.

The members of the Council expressed concern at the lack of progress in the implementation of the security aspects of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. They stressed the necessity of rebuilding trust between the parties. They also emphasized the need to pay greater attention to the Agreement in the forthcoming period. The members of the Council welcomed the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations in implementing the three-phase approach.

On 28 February, the members of the Council agreed that the President should invite the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Alpha Oumar Konaré, to New York to discuss issues related to the Addis Ababa agreement.

Americas

Haiti

On 15 February, the Security Council considered the situation in Haiti. The members had before them the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) (S/2006/1003). The members of the Council also had before them a draft resolution submitted by Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, France, Panama, Peru and the United States of America, which was adopted unanimously as resolution 1743 (2007). Statements were made in explanation of vote after the vote by the representatives of China and Panama. In that resolution, the Council extended the mandate of MINUSTAH until 15 October 2007, with the intention to renew for further period, and called upon the Mission to support the constitutional and political process under way in Haiti and to promote all-inclusive dialogue and national reconciliation. The Council also called upon MINUSTAH, consistent with its mandate, to expand such support to strengthen the State institutions of Haiti. It requested MINUSTAH to continue increased operations in support of the Haitian national police against armed gangs, as deemed necessary to restore security, especially in Port-au-Prince, and encouraged the Mission and the Government of Haiti to undertake coordinated deterrent actions to bring down the level of violence. It also requested MINUSTAH to continue to implement quick-impact projects and, in that context, to accelerate its reorientation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration resources towards a comprehensive community violence reduction programme.

Asia

Afghanistan

On 5 February, the Security Council held informal consultations with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations

Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Tom Koenigs. The Special Representative emphasized that the security situation was fragile, mainly in the south and south-east of the country, while noting the overall progress in reconstruction and development. He observed that the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police should be significantly strengthened throughout 2007.

Recognizing the continuing importance of fighting terrorist and narcotic threats, the members of the Council stressed the need for the continued engagement of the international community in Afghanistan, and for improvements in security sector reform and in the implementation of all interlinked priorities of the Afghanistan Compact. The fourth session of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board had been successful, showing that the Board should be the primary forum for coordination between the donor community and the Afghan administration. Improving regional cooperation in order to tackle the challenges facing Afghanistan remained crucial.

Iraq

On 22 February, during informal consultations, the Security Council issued a statement to the press, in which it expressed its concern over the situation in Iraq and condemned all terrorist attacks, including the recent chlorine gas and other bombings in and around Baghdad, which had resulted in the death and injury of many innocent Iraqi civilians and others.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 13 February, the Security Council held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. During the debate, the Council was briefed by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Alvaro de Soto. In his briefing, the Special Coordinator summarized and assessed the monthly developments in the region and the ongoing diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the Arab-Israeli dispute. He stressed that, through the initiatives under way on the Israeli-Palestinian track, there was an opportunity to foster a dynamic in which positive developments were mutually reinforcing. The Council then heard statements by representatives of all its 15 members, followed by representatives of Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, Kuwait, Germany, Cuba, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Japan, Malaysia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Norway, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Argentina, Morocco, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Senegal.

Lebanon

On 8 February, the members of the Security Council met in informal consultations to hear a briefing by a representative of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on the serious incident between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces along the Blue Line in the area of Yaroun on 7 February. The members of the Council agreed on a statement to the press, in which they expressed deep concern about the incident, welcomed the forthcoming tripartite meeting requested by the Force Commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), and appealed to all parties to respect the Blue Line in its entirety, to exercise utmost restraint and to refrain from any action that could

further escalate the situation. They also reaffirmed their strong support for UNIFIL and reiterated their call for full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

On 13 February, the Council held informal consultations. The members of the Council agreed on a statement to the press, in which they condemned in the strongest terms the bomb attacks on two public buses perpetrated earlier that day in the north-east area of Beirut and that killed three people and caused injury to several others. The members of the Council reiterated their unequivocal condemnation of any attempt to destabilize Lebanon and recalled their determination to continue to assist the Government of Lebanon in the pursuit of the truth and in holding accountable all those involved in that terrorist attack, as well as in other terrorist attacks and assassinations committed in Lebanon since October 2004. Furthermore, they reaffirmed their previous calls on all parties concerned to cooperate fully and urgently to ensure the full implementation of all relevant resolutions concerning the restoration of the territorial integrity, full sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon, in particular resolutions 1559 (2004), 1595 (2005), 1636 (2005), 1664 (2006), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006).

On 13 February, the Council received a copy of a letter from the Prime Minister of Lebanon addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2007/90), in which the Government of Lebanon requested the assistance of the International Independent Investigation Commission in the investigation of the above-mentioned bomb attack near Beirut. Following informal consultations on 15 February, the members of the Council agreed to send a letter from the President of the Council in which they invited the Commission to extend appropriate technical assistance to the Lebanese authorities (S/2007/91).

Timor-Leste

On 12 February, the Security Council held a debate on the situation in Timor-Leste. The members of the Council considered the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) (S/2007/50). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste and Head of UNMIT, Atul Khare, gave an assessment of the situation in Timor-Leste covering the period from 9 August 2006 to 26 January 2007. The Council also heard a statement by the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste, José Ramos-Horta, in which he requested an extension of the mandate of UNMIT in view of the continuing fragile political, security and humanitarian situation in his country and the upcoming national elections. During the meeting, the members of the Council reaffirmed their commitment to provide further assistance to Timor-Leste on its path towards peace and the promotion of development and prosperity. The speakers included representatives of Australia, Brazil, Germany (on behalf of the European Union), Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, Portugal and Singapore.

On 22 February, the Council considered a draft resolution (S/2007/98) prepared in the course of the Council's consultations held on 15, 16 and 20 February. The draft resolution was adopted unanimously as resolution 1745 (2007), by which the Council extended the mandate of the Mission until 26 February 2008, and approved a temporary reinforcement of the Mission's force strength by an additional unit of up to 140 police personnel to supplement the existing law enforcement capacity, particularly during the pre- and post-electoral period. By its resolution 1745 (2007), the Council also requested the Secretary-General to keep it

informed of developments on the ground, in particular of the state of preparations for the upcoming elections and the security situation, and to submit to the Council within 60 days after the presidential and parliamentary elections in Timor-Leste a report that would include recommendations for possible adjustments of the mandate and strength of UNMIT.

Thematic issues

Children and armed conflict

On 13 February, the President of the Security Council received letters from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière, in his capacity as Chairman of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, transmitting the conclusions and recommendations of the Working Group concerning the situation of children affected by armed conflict in Burundi (S/2007/92) and Côte d'Ivoire (S/2007/93) adopted by the Working Group on 9 February. On 20 February, the Council approved the recommendations of the Working Group. Accordingly, letters from the President of the Council were sent to the following addressees:

The President of Côte d'Ivoire

The Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire

The Chairpersons of the International Working Group on Côte d'Ivoire

The Mediator and his representative in Côte d'Ivoire

The Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union

The Secretary-General

The Government of Burundi

Similarly, in follow-up to the approval by the Council of the Working Group's conclusions on parties to the armed conflict in the Sudan (S/2006/971), a letter from the President of the Council was sent to the appropriate authorities of the Sudan, including the President, Vice-Presidents and Ministers of the Government of National Unity.

Maintenance of international peace and security: role of the Security Council in supporting security sector reform

On 20 February, the Security Council held an open debate on the maintenance of international peace and security and the role of the Security Council in supporting security sector reform. The meeting was chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovakia, Ján Kubiš. The opening statement on behalf of the United Nations system was delivered by the Secretary-General. Statements were then made by the President of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, Sheikha Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa; the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Dalius Čekuolis, Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the United Nations; and the Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins, Permanent Representative of Angola to the United Nations. Speakers from among the members of the Council included the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, Cui Tiankai; the Under-Secretary of

State for Foreign Affairs of Italy, Vittorio Craxi; the Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, Muhammad Abdullah Al-Rumaihi; and the Special Envoy of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Pierre Chevalier. In addition to the members of the Council, representatives of 15 other Member States took the floor during the open debate, including Germany, on behalf of the European Union, and Cuba, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The debate provided an important and timely opportunity to discuss the role of security sector reform in the stabilization and reconstruction processes, particularly in the post-conflict context, and its interlinkages with issues such as the protection of human rights, the rule of law, good governance and development. The debate also served as a forum for discussing the role of the international community in general and of the United Nations in particular in the promotion of security sector reform.

At the end of the debate, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2007/3), in which it stressed that reforming the security sector in post-conflict environments was critical to the consolidation of peace and stability, the promotion of poverty reduction, the rule of law and good governance, the extension of legitimate State authority, and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict. At the same time, the Council emphasized that it was the sovereign right and the primary responsibility of each country to determine its national approach and priorities in security sector reform, which should be a nationally owned process rooted in the particular needs and conditions of that country. The Council noted that the United Nations system had made significant contributions to the re-establishment of functioning security sectors in post-conflict environments, and that an increasing number of United Nations organs, funds, programmes and agencies were engaged in reform support activities. The Council also acknowledged the need for a comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on United Nations approaches to security sector reform, to foster its implementation in post-conflict environments, and expressed its readiness to consider such a report within the scope of its prerogatives under the Charter of the United Nations.

Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction: implementation of resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1673 (2006)

On 23 February, the Security Council held an open debate on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the implementation of resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1673 (2006). The meeting was chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovakia. The opening statement on behalf of the United Nations was delivered by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Nobuaki Tanaka. Upon the invitation of the Council, the meeting was addressed by the following representatives of specialized international organizations: the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Rogelio Pfirter; the Representative of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency to the United Nations, Gustavo R. Zlauvinen; and the Director of Compliance and Facilitation of the World Customs Organization, Michael T. Schmitz. In addition to the members of the Council, representatives of 17 other Member States took the floor during the debate, including Germany, on behalf of the European Union, Belarus, on behalf of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and New Zealand, on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

The speakers in the debate welcomed the opportunity to explore ways to forge greater cooperation between the Council and specialized international organizations, which would help them to implement their obligations under resolution 1540 (2004). Many of them also stressed their commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation, and particularly to keeping nuclear, chemical and biological weapons out of the hands of terrorist and criminal networks.

At the end of the debate, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2007/4), in which it acknowledged with appreciation the work of organizations with expertise in the non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery in providing assistance in the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), and affirmed its determination to promote increased multilateral cooperation, particularly with international organizations, as an important way to boost worldwide implementation of that resolution.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

On 15 February, the members of the Security Council agreed on a statement to the press on the terrorist attack on a bus in the south-eastern city of Zahedan, in the Islamic Republic of Iran. They condemned the attack, carried out on 14 February, which killed at least 18 people and wounded many more, and reiterated that no cause could justify the use of terrorist violence. They underlined the need to bring the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of the terrorist attack, and of all terrorist attacks, to justice. The members of the Council extended their sincere condolences to the families of the victims and to the Iranian people.

On 20 February, the members of the Council agreed on a statement to the press on the bombing of the Delhi-Lahore "Friendship Express" train in India. They condemned the terrorist bombing, carried out on 19 February, in which 67 people were killed and nearly 20 injured, including a large number of Pakistani and Indian nationals. They also reiterated that no cause could justify the use of terrorist violence and underlined the need to bring the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of that attack, as well as all acts of terrorism, to justice. They reaffirmed the need to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and by all means under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law. The members of the Council welcomed the commitment to the peace process expressed by the leaders of India and Pakistan after the attack, and their determination to proceed on the path of dialogue.

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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1752 (2007) of 13 April 2007, by which the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) until 15 October 2007. It provides an update of the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia since my report of 3 April 2007 (S/2007/182).

2. My Special Representative, Jean Arnault, continued to lead the Mission. He was assisted by the Chief Military Observer, Major General Niaz Muhammad Khan Khattak (Pakistan). The strength of UNOMIG on 1 July 2007 stood at 135 military observers and 16 police officers (see annex).

II. Political process

3. During the reporting period, UNOMIG continued efforts to maintain peace and stability in the zone of conflict. It also sought to remove obstacles to the resumption of dialogue between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides in the expectation that cooperation on security, the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, economic rehabilitation and humanitarian issues would facilitate meaningful negotiations on a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict, taking into account the principles contained in the document entitled "Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi", its transmittal letter (see S/2002/88, para. 3) and additional ideas by the sides.

4. Throughout the reporting period, my Special Representative maintained regular contact with both sides, as well as with the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General both in Tbilisi and in their capitals. In May and June, several meetings were held in Tbilisi and Moscow with senior representatives of the Group of Friends and the European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus. The Mission facilitated several visits for representatives of the Group of Friends and officials of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to the zone of conflict and Sukhumi.

5. In spite of the expectations raised by the high-level meeting of the Group of Friends chaired by the United Nations and held on 12 and 13 February at Geneva

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(see S/2007/182, paras. 5-7), dialogue between the sides remained suspended during the period under review. The Abkhaz side continued to link the resumption of dialogue, including on non-technical issues, to preconditions, such as the withdrawal of Georgian armed personnel and the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia from the upper Kodori Valley, which was categorically ruled out by the Georgian side. It also linked the resumption of dialogue to the release of David Sigua, an ethnic Georgian working in the de facto administrative structures of the Gali district (see S/2007/182, para. 15), who had disappeared on 3 February 2007. The Government of Georgia has consistently denied any involvement in the disappearance. The sides also differed in their interpretations of Security Council resolution 1752 (2007), which the Georgian side welcomed as confirmation that it had met the Council's recommendations related to the Kodori Valley, while the Abkhaz side maintained that the Georgian side remained in breach of the Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces signed in Moscow on 14 May 1994 (see S/1994/583) and related protocols.

6. Relations between the two sides worsened following what appear to have been informal discussions on the release of Mr. Sigua on the one hand, and the release of the three Georgian students arrested on 1 March as a result of the Shamgona incident (see S/2007/182, para. 14) on the other. On 3 May, the Abkhaz side released the three students. The Georgian side continued to deny any connection to the disappearance of Mr. Sigua and denied any involvement in discussions on the matter. This situation further undermined relations between the sides and overshadowed the release, on 23 April, by the Georgian side, of Pridon Chakaberia (see S/2007/182, para. 22). Against that background, even technical meetings between the two sides were not possible.

7. In May, the Government of Georgia outlined its overall approach to the settlement of its internal conflicts, which included direct dialogue between the parties to the conflict; involvement of impartial mediators; international policing; the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees; and the revision of the legal framework for conflict resolution. The Abkhaz side continued to oppose the modification of existing formats.

8. Concerned by the deterioration of relations between the two sides and the possibility of outbreaks of violence, early in June, the Tbilisi-based Group of Friends met the two sides in Tbilisi and Sukhumi and urged them to put the process back on track. In the same spirit, and also concerned at the lack of follow-up to the previous Geneva meeting, senior representatives of the Group of Friends met in Bonn on 27 and 28 June under the chairmanship of the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. Representatives of the two sides, led by the State Minister for Conflict Resolution Issues, Merab Antadze, and the de facto Foreign Minister, Sergei Shamba, participated in the meeting, as did my Special Representative.

9. On that occasion, the Chairman, while acknowledging some progress in several areas, emphasized outstanding difficulties. He recalled that UNOMIG continued to assess the overall security situation as tense. He mentioned the need to ease tension in the Gali district and referred specifically to the possibility of incidents linked with the recent establishment of the patriotic youth camp in Ganmukhuri (see para. 16 below). He expressed the fear that, in the absence of dialogue, existing mistrust and suspicions would further deepen and the possibility of escalation would increase. The Chairman stressed that both sides had a primary

responsibility to refrain from any acts of violence or provocation. In stressing the need for a resumption of dialogue, he emphasized the role of security dialogue as part and parcel of the effectiveness of the peacekeeping arrangement. Finally, he expected the two sides to further discuss and implement the paper and the proposals for confidence-building measures presented by the Group of Friends in February. He also stressed the view of the United Nations that recent developments only confirmed that the creation of basic levels of trust between the sides and their respective communities remained a fundamental dimension of the settlement.

10. The Georgian side stressed its concern over what it described as a persistent lack of will of the Abkhaz side to engage in direct dialogue, and expressed its readiness to address some of the obstacles to its resumption. In particular, it confirmed its proposal to launch a Joint Fact-Finding Group investigation into the disappearance of Mr. Sigua. The Georgian side also confirmed its readiness to participate in the regular quadripartite meetings, which bring together the two parties, UNOMIG and the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as soon as the terms of reference and rules of procedure prepared by UNOMIG were finalized. Acknowledging continuing issues involving the transit of military vehicles through the security zone, the Georgian side pledged to continue working with UNOMIG to achieve full and timely notification. It reaffirmed its commitment to the 600 threshold in the deployment of law enforcement personnel in the security zone. With regard to the situation in the upper Kodori Valley, the Georgian side stressed that, since deployment in July 2006, the presence of personnel from the Ministry of Internal Affairs there had decreased considerably, now offset by a significant number of local personnel. While stressing its compliance with the 1994 Moscow Agreement, the Georgian side confirmed its intention to align its deployment in the upper Kodori Valley with the policy implemented in other regions of Georgia, including a further increase in the representation of the local population in the police force. It indicated that the number of personnel from the Ministry of Internal Affairs deployed in the upper Kodori Valley could be reviewed in the light of the security situation, including the findings of the investigation into the attack of 11 March (see S/2007/182, para. 27) in the Kodori Valley. With regard to reports on the presence of unidentified armed people in the lower Kodori Valley (see para. 28 below), the Georgian side denied any presence of Georgian security forces in areas under Abkhaz control, called for a full investigation into the matter and expressed its concern about the threat that such a presence might pose to the upper Kodori Valley.

11. In relation to confidence-building measures, the Georgian side reaffirmed its readiness, previously expressed in February, to facilitate contacts between the Abkhaz side and the Abkhaz community in Turkey. It was also prepared to discuss the modalities for the establishment of maritime communications between Sukhumi and Trabzon, Turkey. Reiterating the critical importance of the return of internally displaced persons to Abkhazia, Georgia, the Georgian side urged the resumption of work by the Commission for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, which was established under the 1994 Quadripartite Agreement on Voluntary Return of Refugees and Displaced Persons. It also offered its support for the work of the Commission on missing persons. It expressed its readiness to continue to cooperate with the Abkhaz side on combating swine fever. The Georgian side once again reiterated its readiness for a meeting between the highest leaders of both sides, without preconditions. Finally, the Georgian side suggested that monthly meetings

be held between the parties, the Group of Friends and the United Nations to monitor implementation.

12. The Abkhaz side stressed its concern over what it described as a continuing Georgian military build-up in and around the zone of conflict and the Kodori Valley. It expressed a particular concern over reports of alleged new Georgian checkpoints established in the lower Kodori Valley. In order to resolve security and other issues, the Abkhaz side stated its support for the resumption of the quadripartite meetings and its willingness to participate in a Joint Fact-Finding Group investigation into the disappearance of Mr. Sigua. It also reiterated its readiness to discuss ways and means to ensure law enforcement in the upper Kodori Valley through the involvement of the local population.

13. With regard to confidence-building measures, the Abkhaz side reiterated its interest in the intensification of contacts between the Abkhaz side and the Abkhaz community in Turkey, as proposed by the Georgian side in February. It also proposed the establishment of maritime communication between Sukhumi and Trabzon, and was ready to discuss ways and means to ensure transparency and accountability in relation to Customs control with the support of the international community. The Abkhaz side also expressed its readiness to cooperate in the area of missing persons, as proposed by the International Committee of the Red Cross, and to continue its cooperation in combating swine fever, in accordance with the mechanisms established in January 2006 in relation to the avian flu. The Abkhaz side reiterated that it was prepared to consider a meeting between the two sides at the leadership level provided that it was well prepared and resulted in concrete security or economic outcomes, such as a commitment to the non-use of force or to the lifting of the CIS economic restrictions. The Abkhaz side welcomed the continuation of informal dialogue involving civil society representatives. Finally, the Abkhaz side suggested that, with regard to those confidence-building measures, UNOMIG should pave the way for direct dialogue by developing proposals acceptable to both sides.

14. For their part, the Group of Friends stressed the priority that they attached to security and the preservation of peace. In that respect, they expressed their concerns about the reported movements of unidentified armed personnel in the lower Kodori Valley. They urged that the matter be investigated and resolved. They also reiterated their serious concern about the location of the patriotic youth camp in the vicinity of the ceasefire line, urged the sides to exercise maximum restraint and requested that the camp be relocated away from the security zone. They welcomed the agreement by the two parties to participate in the quadripartite meetings and noted their readiness to hold the first meeting in July 2007. They also welcomed the readiness of the sides to participate in a Joint Fact-Finding Group investigation into the Sigua case and proposed that it start as soon as possible. The Friends invited the sides to follow-up their commitment to several of the confidence-building measures endorsed by the Security Council, in particular the establishment of maritime communication between Sukhumi and Trabzon, Turkey, with appropriate Customs control. With regard to economic cooperation, the Friends welcomed the agreement of both sides to resume the work of the Steering Committee of the rehabilitation programme funded by the European Commission in the zone of conflict. They also encouraged the two sides to start cooperating on issues such as missing persons, and to continue cooperating in combating swine fever. They stressed the importance of holding a meeting at the leadership level. Finally, the Friends reiterated their

undertaking made in February to monitor closely the implementation of confidence-building measures and the assurances given by the parties during the meeting.

15. On 4 July, the second meeting of the Steering Committee of the rehabilitation programme in the zone of conflict, funded by the European Commission, was held in the UNOMIG offices in Zugdidi and was chaired by the Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to Georgia, Ambassador Per Eklund. UNOMIG and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which are implementing partners of the rehabilitation programme, were represented by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, respectively. The Georgian side was represented by the Deputy State Minister for Conflicts Resolution Issues, and the Abkhaz side by the de facto Deputy Foreign Minister. The participants considered reports on the implementation of the first phase of the programme and presented their views on a range of issues, including the ways and means to better coordinate the implementation of ongoing projects and those planned under the second phase of the programme. The participants also exchanged views on the kind of assistance that the European Commission could provide under the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan. In particular, they agreed to focus on confidence-building measures in the preparation of their project proposals. The participants agreed to hold a third meeting of the Steering Committee in Gali, in the third quarter of 2007.

III. Developments in the Mission's area of responsibility

Gali sector

16. The security situation in the Gali sector remained tense. UNOMIG maintained an increased rate of patrols, including through the periodic deployment of temporary forward patrol bases co-located with CIS peacekeeping force check-posts. The Abkhaz de facto militia continued to deploy additional posts throughout the Gali district, though personnel numbers remained below the limits specified in relevant agreements and protocols. Further deployments were observed following the opening, on 26 May, of a large Georgian patriot youth camp at Ganmukhuri, in close proximity to the ceasefire line on the Georgian-controlled northern side of the Inguri River. The CIS peacekeeping force deployed an additional checkpoint at Nakargali, opposite the Ganmukhuri camp, and increased its air patrols in the area. The Abkhaz side increased its coastal patrols in the area. UNOMIG followed up on Georgian reports that a Russian military base was being constructed near Primorsk town in the restricted weapons zone, but no evidence of such construction was observed.

17. Crime reports during the reporting period included two killings, seven shootings, nine robberies and three abductions. In April, the Abkhaz de facto authorities arrested five Georgian fishermen in two separate incidents in the coastal waters off the Gali and Ochamchira districts. The fishermen were subsequently released but their vessels were confiscated.

18. The United Nations police continued to liaise with the Abkhaz de facto militia in the Gali, Tkvarcheli and Ochamchira districts. It conducted eight training courses on crime scene management, evidence collection, interview techniques and police tactics, which were attended by 113 Abkhaz de facto law enforcement officers. From 23 to 27 April, the United Nations police also organized a specialized training

course for 22 Abkhaz forensic experts and distributed seven lots of forensic and tactical equipment.

19. The Human Rights Office in Abkhazia, Georgia, followed up on reports of robbery, abductions and cases of missing persons in the lower Gali district with both the affected families and the de facto law enforcement agencies. Two cases of abduction were resolved upon payment of ransom; some of the perpetrators were subsequently identified and held in custody pending trial. The Office followed up on reports of conscription practices. Despite the lack of complaints about the treatment of Georgians in the de facto armed forces, several features of the conscription practice such as overnight detention and harassment raise concern. The Office also received information and complaints of acts of intimidation by officials across the ceasefire line directed in particular at people suspected of cooperating with the de facto authorities in Gali.

20. The issue of the language of instruction remained of concern to the local population and those willing to return. While the language of instruction and of the school curriculum is still Georgian in the lower Gali district schools, Abkhaz de facto officials made statements to the effect that Abkhaz textbooks on history, geography and national culture in Russian would be introduced to the school curriculum in September 2007. The Georgian side protested against those statements.

Zugdidi sector

21. The situation in the Zugdidi sector remained calm. Following the reopening of the Khida Pass in May, UNOMIG observed increased Georgian ground and air movement to and from the upper Kodori Valley. The temporary UNOMIG observation post on the road to the upper Kodori Valley in the Zugdidi security zone (see S/2007/182, para. 20) reported 4 cases of isolated military vehicle movement and 55 cases of movement by vehicles of the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as 43 cases of overflights by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, including 25 aircraft and 6 helicopter flights without prior notification and 12 helicopter flights with prior notification. The Georgian side subsequently stated that all the overflights were for rotating and resupplying personnel deployed in the upper Kodori Valley. During the reporting period, UNOMIG issued seven reports of violation of the 1994 Moscow Agreement in the Zugdidi district, including six for the presence and transit of military vehicles and personnel in the Zugdidi security zone and one for the denial of access to a UNOMIG patrol at the Ganmukhuri patriot youth camp during its construction on 24 April.

22. On 12 April, a Georgian Coast Guard exercise was held within the coastal boundary of the security zone. The exercise, conducted by two vessels without prior notification, included live machine gun fire from one of the vessels.

23. On 10 May, an incident involving a CIS peacekeeping force patrol and personnel of the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs occurred when the patrol attempted to enter the Ganmukhuri patriot youth camp in the security zone. A joint investigation into the incident has been ordered by the UNOMIG Chief Military Observer. The Joint Fact-Finding Group, however, has not yet been convened owing to the reluctance of the Abkhaz side to participate.

24. The rotation of the southern operations group battalion of the CIS peacekeeping force, deployed on the Georgian-controlled side of the ceasefire line, was conducted from 26 May to 2 June. UNOMIG monitored the rotation closely, and did not observe any significant changes to the size or equipment of the battalion.

25. The crime situation in Zugdidi district remained stable. Five homicides, seven robberies and three abductions were reported. United Nations police conducted 20 training courses in crime scene management, use of force, weapons handling, self-defence, and crime scene investigation. The courses were attended by a total of 187 law enforcement officers. From 18 to 22 April, experts from the Police College of the Public Service Academy of Estonia visited Zugdidi to conduct a post-course assessment of Georgian law enforcement officers who had undergone training in the College during the period 2005-2007. In order to assess better the performance of Georgian law enforcement officers and provide them with appropriate advice, United Nations police conducted 32 joint patrols with local law enforcement officers and made 65 visits to monitor local police facilities in the security zone. Implementation of the community policing and crime prevention programmes continued, including a number of courses on drug-abuse prevention and traffic security awareness among schoolchildren of the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region.

Kodori Valley

26. The Joint Fact-Finding Group into the incident of 11 March in the upper Kodori Valley conducted two additional patrols during the reporting period: one to the Tkvarcheli region on 11 May, and the other to the lower and upper Kodori Valley on 14 and 15 May. After four working sessions and two extensive ground patrols, the Group completed its interim report on 2 April. During the same month, it approached the Russian Federation, through UNOMIG, to request assistance in a number of aspects of the investigation. In June, the Russian Federation provided relevant experts to assist the Group, but was unable to provide additional information sought by it. The Group held another four sessions and conducted two more patrols before it adopted a supplementary report on 13 June. After the Group had compiled and discussed all available data, evidence and information, its report, signed by all Group members, was posted on the UNOMIG website.

27. A joint patrol with the CIS peacekeeping force was conducted from 4 to 6 June. The patrol found the situation in the upper Kodori Valley essentially unchanged compared to its previous patrol conducted from 5 to 7 March (see S/2007/182, para. 26). During the patrol, UNOMIG made preparation for the reactivation of the Kodori team base in Adjara, scheduled for July. The Georgian side has begun construction of a new road through the Khida Pass, which is expected to be completed later in 2007 and will provide year-round access to the upper Kodori Valley. One report of a violation was issued to the Georgian side for the presence of a military truck in the upper Kodori Valley on 5 June.

28. On 25 June, the Abkhaz side informed UNOMIG about the alleged presence of two Georgian observation posts in the lower Kodori Valley and requested the Mission to assess the situation. On 26 June, UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeeping Force sent a joint patrol to the area designated by the Abkhaz side. The patrol confirmed and photographed using special optical instruments, the presence of seven unidentified uniformed persons, one of whom was armed at the time. The

Georgian side denied having any presence in Abkhaz-controlled areas (see para. 10 above) and expressed its own concern about the reports. On 30 June, the Mission launched a special patrol to reoccupy its temporary observation post near the so-called Broken Bridge in order to monitor the new positions or react immediately to any new development in the lower Kodori Valley. The patrol was initially forced to return, however, as a large landslide had blocked the route; on 4 July, however, the patrol was deployed and has since confirmed the continued presence of the unidentified group on the heights north-west of the Broken Bridge. The CIS peacekeeping force reinforced its two checkposts in the lower Kodori Valley, including with a mine-clearance team, and increased the number of foot patrols in the area. In addition, the surrounding heights were being occupied during daylight for enhanced observation, and air patrols were made early in July. The Abkhaz side also reinforced its checkpost and increased foot patrols in the area.

Mission-wide developments

29. Weekly quadripartite meetings remained suspended (see S/2007/15, para. 26). It is hoped that the meetings will resume in July (see para. 14 above). The Joint Fact-Finding Group has 13 open cases, including 4 awaiting completion. Except for the investigation into the incident of 11 March in the upper Kodori Valley, however, work on all other cases remains suspended.

IV. Cooperation with the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States

30. UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeeping force maintained close cooperation in fulfilling their respective mandates. In addition to its joint patrols with the Mission in both the lower and upper Kodori Valley, the CIS peacekeeping force is providing escort assistance to the inspections by the Joint Fact-Finding Group and logistic assistance to the Mission's temporary forward patrol bases in the Gali and Zugdidi security zones. The CIS peacekeeping force also established an additional checkpoint at Nakargali, in the lower Gali district, and in the vicinity of the Ganmukhuri patriot youth camp, and enhanced its ground and air patrolling in the Gali district.

V. Human rights issues

31. During the reporting period, the United Nations Human Rights Office in Abkhazia, Georgia, continued to conduct regular monitoring visits to detention facilities, including frequent visits to the detention centre in Gali town, to provide legal advisory services to the local population and to monitor court trials, including for the resolution of a number of cases in which the people in custody have been released. In particular, the Office closely followed the detention of the three Georgian students arrested on 1 March and provided them with legal assistance. It also continued to draw the attention of the de facto authorities to the need to discontinue the discriminatory practice of declining as inadmissible property rights claims filed by owners who had fled since 1992 as a result of forced displacement (see S/2007/182, para. 34). On a related issue, the Mission called the attention of the Abkhaz de facto Parliament to the fact that draft legislation attempting to restrict the

scope and rights of internally displaced persons would be in breach of international law and would undermine the fundamental right of return.

32. In April, the Office commenced implementation, in cooperation with local non-governmental organizations, of four projects funded by the Government of Switzerland within the framework of a human rights programme. The projects include a trust telephone line for male and female detainees; free legal and psychological aid for vulnerable groups; awareness-raising on human rights issues based on the collection of testimonies from repressed persons; and the dissemination of knowledge on domestic violence. In April, the Office, in cooperation with OSCE, also launched a project, implemented by a local non-governmental organization, on the promotion of human rights and civic activism among school students through a mini-grants competition across Abkhazia, Georgia. It also continued support, also through a local non-governmental organization, for the Human Rights Centre at Sukhumi University and to liaise with the human rights centre established by local non-governmental organizations in Gali town. Projects in the area of human rights education and training, implemented by local non-governmental organizations within the framework of the "Assisting Communities Together" project funded by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, were completed during the reporting period.

VI. Humanitarian and rehabilitation activities

33. The Mission continued implementation of the rehabilitation programme funded by the European Commission in the Gali, Tkvarcheli, Ochamchira and Zugdidi districts, and in particular the rehabilitation of three hospitals in the zone of conflict. Rehabilitation of the Zugdidi tuberculosis hospital was completed in May. The Government of Georgia approved the rehabilitation of the sewage treatment system in Zugdidi, which was included in phase I of the rehabilitation programme. Work is due to commence in the near future. In June, UNOMIG concluded a contract for the supply and installation of an X-ray machine at Ochamchira hospital, to be funded by the Government of Germany.

34. United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations continued to assist vulnerable groups affected by the conflict on the Abkhaz-controlled side of the ceasefire line. UNDP continued its integrated recovery programme, encompassing agricultural income-generation assistance, water rehabilitation projects and capacity-building in the Gali, Tkvarcheli and Ochamchira districts. It also maintained the Sukhumi information centre for the international and local aid community working in Abkhazia, Georgia. In mid-April, the World Food Programme started providing on-site feeding for 10,000 school children in 32 vulnerable schools and take-home dry food rations for the most at risk of them. In line with its exit strategy, on-site feeding was phased out in June 2007. A new round of the food-for-work programme also provided food to more than 13,000 beneficiaries in the Gali, Ochamchira and Tkvarcheli districts, in collaboration with World Vision International.

35. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), together with the Danish Refugee Council, the Norwegian Refugee Council, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, continued providing assistance under its strategy to promote confidence-building measures for displaced and war-

affected persons, aimed at building confidence at the grass-roots level through assistance based on self-help and community mobilization. UNHCR also implemented, through the international non-governmental organization Première Urgence, a home garden project, which benefits 150 vulnerable people, and also initiated, together with World Vision International, a social support centre project in three locations in the Gali and Tkvarcheli districts, to address specific age and gender issues.

36. Première Urgence commenced a rehabilitation programme targeting 85 individual houses, 9 apartment blocks and 2 community infrastructure projects, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. It also continued its programme funded by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office to improve the livelihoods and food security of 550 farmers and small business owners in the Sukhumi, Gulripshi, Tkvarcheli, Gali and Ochamchira districts.

VII. Support issues

37. During the reporting period, UNOMIG continued to conduct infrastructure repairs of key roads used by its military observers for patrolling the conflict zone.

38. The Mission continued its HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness campaign, now included in induction training for all personnel and weekly medical training for military personnel. In compliance with the strategic priorities for 2007/08 of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in July 2007, UNOMIG participated in the HIV/AIDS strategic priorities workshop, specifically organized for UNOMIG personnel in all forms of the Mission's offices. Since my previous report, 34 new military and 7 civilian personnel (36 male and 5 female) have been briefed on gender equality in peacekeeping.

VIII. Observations

39. I hope that the outcome of the meeting of the Group of Friends, chaired by the United Nations, on 27 and 28 June, in Bonn, will lead to tangible improvements on the ground, particularly with regard to security, economic cooperation and humanitarian issues. Both sides must now take concrete steps to implement the understandings reached at the meeting. The holding of the second session of the Steering Committee of the programme of rehabilitation funded by the European Commission in the zone of conflict, which had not met since 2005, will be a first positive step in that direction. Ensuring a swift follow-up to the agreement reached in Bonn on the resumption of the quadripartite meetings on security and the Joint Fact-Finding Group investigation on the disappearance of Mr. Sigua will be a key factor. UNOMIG circulated to the participants in the meetings the draft terms of reference that take into account the concerns of sides. I hope they will be accepted promptly so as to allow the meetings to resume without delay. The Mission is also trying to ensure that it has the investigative resources required to ensure its effective participation in the investigation of the Joint Fact-Finding Group on the disappearance of Mr. Sigua. More generally, UNOMIG intends to do its utmost to facilitate the implementation of all the commitments made in Bonn, with the support of the Group of Friends, including the confidence-building measures endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1752 (2007).

40. In parallel to the resumption of contacts and the implementation of the agreed confidence-building measures, the sides need to redouble their efforts to avoid action that could lead to a renewal of hostilities. While the situation around the patriotic youth camp in Ganmukhuri has remained calm since its opening on 26 May, UNOMIG has observed increased activity and posturing on both sides of the ceasefire line in the vicinity of the camp, including off the coast. In order to reduce the possibility of incidents, the United Nations joins the Group of Friends in calling on the Government of Georgia to move the camp away from the security zone. Cultural activities, which are the focus of the youth camp, come under the same recommendation made in my previous report with regard to civil and political activities, namely that they should be carried out in a manner that does not allow for misunderstanding, miscalculation and subsequent violence. Potentially critical situations caused by the deployment of armed personnel, such as the one observed in late June in the vicinity of the Broken Bridge, should be avoided. I urge the two sides to stay away from one another. A separation of opposing forces is the primary and often the most effective guarantee of the preservation of peace.

41. The work of the Joint Fact-Finding Group in relation to the incident of 11 March in the upper Kodori Valley has been finalized with recommendations and published. In my previous report, I suggested that the two parties and the international community should approach the situation in the upper Kodori Valley also in terms of prevention, in particular by remedying the serious limitations of UNOMIG observation in that area. In consultation with Headquarters, the Mission has proposed four measures to that effect: reactivating the UNOMIG patrol base in Adjara, in the upper Kodori Valley; extending the area of UNOMIG patrols to the areas surrounding the upper Kodori Valley; equipping UNOMIG with unmanned aerial vehicles; and, subject to further feasibility studies, the deployment of an artillery radar to be operated by UNOMIG, in the Kodori Valley. Such measures would undoubtedly increase the Mission's operational capabilities, including its monitoring and observing capacities in the sensitive areas of operation and, based on lessons learned from the experience of the above-mentioned Joint Fact-Finding Group investigation, they would also considerably increase the effectiveness of any future investigation. As mentioned above, the reactivation of the Adjara patrol base in upper Kodori Valley is already in progress. Discussions will continue on the other proposed measures with both sides. In particular, they should focus on the use of unmanned aerial vehicles as the only way for UNOMIG to fulfil its obligations in areas where the risks inherent in air patrols by helicopter are simply too high and ground patrolling is impossible because of inaccessibility of terrain or other threats. The developing situation on the heights around the Broken Bridge is another case in point.

42. In concluding, I wish to express my gratitude to the Group of Friends, which, during the period under review, once again provided invaluable support to my efforts in relation to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict and the activities of UNOMIG. I also wish to express my appreciation for the assistance received from international organizations and Member States. Finally, I wish thank my Special Representative, Jean Arnault, the Chief Military Observer, Major General Niaz Muhammad Khan Khattak, and the men and women of UNOMIG for their dedication to the search for a fair and lasting solution to this unresolved conflict in a complex and tense environment.

Annex

Countries providing military observers and civilian police personnel (as at 1 July 2007)

Country	*Military observers*
Albania	3
Austria	2
Bangladesh	8
Croatia	2
Czech Republic	6
Denmark	5
Egypt	8
France	3
Germany	12
Greece	5
Hungary	7
Indonesia	4
Jordan	7
Lithuania	2
Moldova	1
Nepal	1
Pakistan	11[a]
Poland	6
Republic of Korea	7
Romania	2
Russian Federation	4
Sweden	3
Switzerland	4
Turkey	5
Ukraine	5
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	5
United States of America	2
Uruguay	3
Yemen	1
Total	**134**

[a] Including the Chief Military Observer.

Country	*Civilian police personnel*
Czech Republic	2
Germany	4
Ghana	1
Philippines	2
Poland	2
Russian Federation	2
Sweden	1
Switzerland	2
Ukraine	2[a]
Total	**18**

[a] Including the Senior Police Adviser.

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Report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 1320 (2000) of 15 September 2000 and provides an update on the peace process since my report of 30 April 2007 (S/2007/250). The report also describes the activities of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), the current mandate of which expires on 31 July 2007.

II. Status of the Temporary Security Zone and adjacent areas and cooperation with the parties

2. The military situation in the Temporary Security Zone and the adjacent areas has remained tense and potentially unstable during the reporting period. Eritrea has continued the induction of forces into the Zone in Sector West, where, according to very approximate estimates by UNMEE, at least 400 additional troops were deployed over the reporting period. In addition to troop rotations in Sector Centre, as well as in Subsector East, Eritrean Defence Forces (EDF) were observed actively constructing new defences in the Zone, including in close proximity to Badme and other areas. UNMEE also observed that, through rotations, the militia manning the posts in the Zone were increasingly being replaced by regular EDF troops, in direct violation of the Protocol Agreement and the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities of 18 June 2000.

3. Due to the severe restrictions imposed on the Mission's freedom of movement in the Temporary Security Zone, it has been difficult to ascertain the exact number of EDF soldiers currently inside the Zone. However, the Mission's assessment is that the Eritrean Defence Forces has effectively occupied large swathes of the Zone with military personnel numbering in the thousands. For instance, early in July, UNMEE monitored up to 1,000 Eritrean military personnel with personal weapons, including rocket-grenade launchers, moving within the Temporary Security Zone in Sector Centre. The Mission further observed the resettlement of approximately 8,400 internally displaced persons inside the Zone in Sector West. Some of those persons are reported to be armed.

4. At the same time, UNMEE is facing an increasingly negative attitude on the part of military commanders inside the Temporary Security Zone, particularly following the address to the nation by the President of Eritrea on the occasion of the

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country's Independence Day on 24 May, in which he said that the Temporary Security Zone had been rendered obsolete and meaningless and that it was Eritrea's sovereign and legal right to undertake development projects therein, without seeking permission from anyone. He further stated that the Eritrea Defence Forces had the obligation and right to conduct development programmes within and ensure protection of the Temporary Security Zone. Since then, many EDF commanders, when encountering UNMEE personnel, have openly questioned the validity of the Temporary Security Zone and admitted the presence of Eritrean Defence Forces therein.

5. During the same period, Ethiopian forces were observed carrying out large-scale training and preparing defences, including around the highly sensitive area of Badme. In June, the Ethiopian forces conducted training that included the live firing of small arms and heavy weapons and the tactical movement of tanks and armoured personnel carriers in the areas adjacent to Sector West.

6. In May and June, the Ethiopian forces withdrew some of their front-line troops along the border, in the area of Bure, in Subsector East. During the reporting period, the 12 tanks and 17 artillery guns that were observed in that area in February remained in their locations in the adjacent area, near the southern boundary of the Temporary Security Zone.

7. During May and June, UNMEE investigated four reports by the Ethiopian authorities concerning alleged cross-border firings and raids by Eritrean elements in the village of Dima near Humera in Sector West and near Italian Fort and Zelambesa in Sector Centre. The Mission could not independently verify those reports. In addition, UNMEE has defused tense situations along the border. On 19 May, the Mission prevented a potential incident in which Ethiopian soldiers threatened to open fire on an Eritrean militia carrying out reconnaissance on the Humera bridge. The Mission has also continued to assist with investigations into potentially dangerous incidents of cattle-rustling and with the repatriation of persons who inadvertently crossed the border.

8. Despite the current restrictions on the freedom of movement imposed on UNMEE (see paras. 10-16 below), the presence of UNMEE permanent and semi-permanent posts at sensitive locations in and outside the Temporary Security Zone has acquired increased importance in maintaining stability. Those posts provide the Mission with valuable information pertaining to military preparations and also serve to deter potential hostile acts by either side.

9. Altogether, over the reporting period, the two parties have been concentrating their forces along the border areas. Eritrea is infiltrating its troops and other armed elements into the Temporary Security Zone in an effort to expand its control. Ethiopia has deployed more troops in close proximity to the southern boundary of the Zone, although most of those forces remain outside the areas adjacent to the Zone. Those deployments have contributed to increasing tension between the two parties. Despite repeated assertions by the leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea that war is not imminent, the present situation is a source of serious concern. In his 28 June 2007 statement to the Parliament, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia said that his Government was building the capacity of the Defence Forces to reverse any aggression that might be attempted by Eritrea. As the parties continue military preparations, there is a serious risk that a relatively minor incident could lead to a military confrontation.

III. Restrictions on freedom of movement

10. In view of the severe restrictions imposed by Eritrea on the Mission's operations, as mentioned in paragraph 3 above, the ability of the Mission to effectively monitor the Temporary Security Zone and the adjacent areas has been seriously undermined, particularly in Sector West. During the reporting period, Eritrea has enforced 45 permanent (longer than six months) restrictions on the Mission's freedom of movement. For instance, it has restricted the Mission's patrols to the main supply routes within the Zone in Sectors West and Centre, and it closed the strategically important bridge between Om Hajer in Eritrea and Humera in Ethiopia, in Sector West, in October 2006. In the meantime, Ethiopia maintains restrictions on patrols in Humera in Sector West, Rama in Sector Centre and Bure in Subsector East, and it also had repeatedly restricted the Mission's demining operations between February 2006 and June 2007.

11. As mentioned above, the Mission's static checkpoints, however, are still able to monitor considerable movements of troops and heavy equipment into and out of the Temporary Security Zone, in particular in Sector Centre and Subsector East. The very difficult nature of the terrain in the two sectors, which bars major movements away from the main roads and the strategically situated static checkpoints, facilitates that monitoring activity.

12. Since my last report, Eritrea has imposed further restrictions on the Mission's freedom of movement. Beginning in May, it introduced a further ban on the Mission's freedom of movement on the Barentu-Tesseney-Om Hajer road in Sector West, which had been intermittently closed. As from 18 June, the road was closed again, which resulted in the complete isolation of the United Nations military observer team site at Om Hajer, causing major operational, administrative and safety difficulties with accessing the site. The authorities also closed the Barentu-Tokombia-Shilalo road from 5 April to 15 June, but reopened it following repeated protests by UNMEE. During the closure, the Mission was forced to use the Barentu-Shambiko-Shilalo road, which is impassable during the rainy season, from July to September, and unsafe because of the threat of mines. In addition, on 6 May local militia threatened to shoot UNMEE sentries manning entry and exit barriers at Kerkesha in Sector West, if they did not keep the barriers open for the passage of armed elements.

13. Severe new restrictions were also imposed in Sector Centre, where local commanders have repeatedly warned UNMEE personnel to avoid moving away from the main roads. On 18 May 2007, the local police detained an UNMEE patrol near Mendefera in the Temporary Security Zone for eight hours. In other incidents, on 26 April and 5 May, Eritrean Defence Forces personnel stopped UNMEE patrols from carrying out their tasks by firing warning shots in the air, while on 3 June a militia commander stopped another patrol at gunpoint. In June, new restrictions were introduced in the Zone in Subsector East. The Mission repeatedly protested the restrictions to the Eritrean authorities, to no avail. During a meeting on 5 June, the Eritrean Commissioner informed UNMEE representatives that the Mission must respect the imposed regulations, since local commanders viewed its activities with considerable apprehension and were determined to ensure that the restrictions were complied with.

14. In what seems to be a further tightening of restrictions imposed on UNMEE, a senior official from the Department for Peacekeeping Operations who was visiting the region in May was denied an Eritrean visa on grounds of his nationality. On 25 June, the administrator of Adi Quala in Sector Centre demanded that UNMEE pay for the usage of a water well that the Mission had drilled in 2004, or that it provide a written guarantee that all assets at the well, including the generator, would be handed over to the municipality of Adi Quala once the Mission had been terminated.

15. Ethiopia, for its part, imposed some restrictions on the freedom of movement of the Mission's military observers in the Humera area, in Sector West, and maintained the restrictions it had imposed earlier in the Rama area, in Sector Centre, and Bure, in Subsector East.

16. Admittedly, the difficulties that UNMEE is experiencing in monitoring the movement of troops and equipment in the Temporary Security Zone, in particular in Sector West and Subsector East, as well as the adjacent areas, have created a serious gap in the Mission's information on the current situation. To bridge that gap, I appeal to those Member States that possess relevant capacity to share with the United Nations information about the implementation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities by the parties.

IV. Military Coordination Commission

17. Since the 37th meeting of the Military Coordination Commission, held on 31 July 2006, UNMEE has not succeeded in convening any further Commission meetings between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The planned 38th meeting of the Commission was cancelled after Ethiopia requested a change of date. Subsequently, Ethiopia expressed reservations about holding Commission meetings because of the introduction of the Eritrean Defence Forces into the Temporary Security Zone. Since then, Ethiopia has maintained that it will participate in the meetings of the Commission following the withdrawal by Eritrea of its troops and heavy military equipment from the Zone. Notwithstanding the present difficulties, UNMEE is making every effort to encourage the resumption of the Commission's work. On 21 June, UNMEE sent further letters of invitation to the two parties proposing that a meeting of the Commission be held in the first half of July 2007. On 26 June, the Eritrean Commissioner confirmed that his Government had no difficulty in attending the meeting provided that Ethiopia also agreed to do so. Ethiopia has not yet responded to that invitation.

V. Implementation of Security Council resolution 1741 (2007)

Reconfiguration of the military component of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea

18. By the end of April 2007, UNMEE had completed the downsizing of its military component from 2,300 to 1,700 military personnel, including 230 military observers, in accordance with paragraph 2 of Security Council resolution 1741 (2007). The Mission maintains 22 static points, including 9 in Sector West, 10 in Sector Centre and 3 in Subsector East. On the average, UNMEE conducts

approximately 580 patrols per week, or more than 80 patrols per day, by both military contingents and observers.

Cooperation of the parties in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1741 (2007)

19. Early in June 2007, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs visited Eritrea and Ethiopia, where, during discussions on Somalia, he informed the leadership of the two countries about my desire for continued dialogue on the stalled Eritrea-Ethiopia peace process.

20. On 14 June 2007, I addressed letters to the President of Eritrea and the Prime Minister of Ethiopia on the occasion of the seventh anniversary of the Algiers Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities of 18 June 2000. In those letters, I raised a number of issues that should be resolved, in order to move the demarcation process forward. I assured the two leaders of my determination to pursue consultations with both countries in an effort to resolve the outstanding issues in the peace process. In his response of 25 June 2007, the Ethiopian Prime Minister stated that he was committed to cooperating with the United Nations and assured me of his support. He underlined, however, that demarcation would be inconceivable until Eritrea had fully complied with the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, including the restoration of the integrity of the Temporary Security Zone.

21. I regret to report that the demand of the Security Council that Eritrea immediately withdraw troops and equipment from the Temporary Security Zone, as requested in paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 1741 (2007), has not been implemented. Neither the restrictions on the Mission's movement nor those on its operations have been reversed, as demanded by the Council in the resolution.

22. With regard to the demand of the Security Council that Ethiopia accept fully and without delay the final and binding decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission, and take immediate steps to enable the Commission to demarcate the boundary, I take note of the letter dated 8 June 2007 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia to the President of the Security Council, reiterating that his Government had accepted the delimitation decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission without preconditions. At the same time, I note Eritrea's expression of readiness to cooperate with the United Nations in order to implement the Commission's decision, as stated by the Eritrean President on 9 June 2007 during his meeting in Asmara with the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. Those statements now have to be implemented in practice.

23. I also urge the parties fully to comply with the call by the Security Council to show maximum restraint and to refrain from any threat or use of force against each other, and to put an end to the exchange of hostile statements.

VI. Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission

24. I regret to report that the parties have made no progress towards the implementation of the delimitation decision announced by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission on 13 April 2002. I would also like to draw the parties' attention to the Commission's decision to convene a meeting with them on

6 September. A detailed account of the work of the Commission is contained in annex II to the present report.

VII. Mine action

25. Landmines and unexploded ordnance continue to present a major threat to the people who live and work in the Temporary Security Zone and the adjacent areas, hindering their return to normal life. The Mission's Mine Action Coordination Centre continues to provide support to UNMEE as well as to carry out humanitarian demining operations. During the reporting period, teams contracted by the Centre cleared a total area of 384,130 square metres and more than 392 kilometres of road, besides verifying an additional 794 kilometres of road. The Centre also carried out the disposal of explosive ordnance and undertook mine-risk education. It conducted an investigation into two incidents involving unexploded ordnance that occurred in May and June, in Sector Centre, in which two children were injured.

26. The current efforts by the Mine Action Coordination Centre are, however, hampered by restrictions on freedom of movement and on the supply of fuel, which impede its ability to provide an adequate response to incidents involving mines and unexploded ordnance within the Temporary Security Zone and the adjacent areas.

VIII. Human rights

27. UNMEE continued to monitor the human rights situation, with emphasis on the condition of the most vulnerable groups. It continued to assist the two parties in the repatriation of nationals to their countries of origin, under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

28. During the reporting period, UNMEE observed an increase in the number of illegal cross-border incidents, particularly incidents involving minors. Most of the nearly 14,500 Eritrean refugees living in the Shimelba camp in Ethiopia continued to express concern over the slow pace at which the third-country resettlement programme is proceeding.

IX. Humanitarian developments

29. By mid-June 2007, the Government of Eritrea, with the support of partners led by the United Nations, had resettled most of the internally displaced persons from the Zoba Debub area to their places of origin.

30. My Special Humanitarian Envoy for the Horn of Africa undertook a follow-up visit to Eritrea from 20 to 23 June to discuss with the Government issues related to food security, in preparation for the Multi-Country Consultation on Food Security in the Horn of Africa, held in Nairobi at the end of June.

31. In Ethiopia, security is a major challenge for the provision of humanitarian assistance in the Gambella and Somali regions, especially within the Kohare and Degehabur zones. There are also reports of deteriorating food security situations in the Afar, Oromiya and Somali regions of Ethiopia, while the food situation in the

remainder of the country is stable. Afar is currently considered an area of concern because the rainy season failed to meet expectations.

32. During the reporting period, the humanitarian situation in the Gambella region has further deteriorated following the resettlement of some 25,000 individuals of the Jikany Nuer population, from southern Ethiopia in Itang, back to their places of origin in Tiergol, Akobo and other areas west of the Gambella region. The United Nations country team is also concerned about the protection of the affected population, particularly those moving from Itang, as well as those moving to the Sudan.

X. Conduct and discipline

33. During the reporting period, the recruitment of a Chief of the UNMEE Conduct and Discipline Unit has been completed. The Mission continues to maintain the zero-tolerance policy on matters of serious misconduct, especially sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers. The Mission is in the process of designing an effective prevention and enforcement strategy on issues of conduct and discipline. Since my last report, there has been one case of serious misconduct, which is currently under investigation.

XI. HIV/AIDS

34. The UNMEE HIV/AIDS unit continued to offer induction training to incoming military and civilian personnel. It also conducted awareness sessions for contingent members. Voluntary counselling and testing services for Mission personnel are provided by the unit and within the Mission's contingents. The mainstreaming of HIV activities into the Mission's mandate has led to growing collaboration with the Public Information Office through its publications and radio programmes, as well as with the Human Rights Office through participation in human rights lecture series in Mekelle, Ethiopia. The unit also collaborates with the other United Nations agencies in Eritrea.

XII. Administration and support

35. The provision of support to the Mission in Eritrea is hampered by the continued restrictions on helicopter flights imposed by the Eritrean authorities, freedom of movement restrictions, the exclusion from service of staff of certain nationalities in Eritrea, restrictions on the supply of diesel fuel to UNMEE, a ban on the import of poultry, restrictions on hiring local staff and the detention of some local personnel of the Mission. At the same time, Ethiopia maintains a number of restrictions on the Mission's freedom of movement, as described in paragraph 15 above. All of those restrictions have resulted in major operational and logistical difficulties for the Mission.

XIII. Financial implications

36. The General Assembly, by its resolution 61/248 B of 29 June 2007, appropriated the amount of $113.5 million for the maintenance of UNMEE for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008. Therefore, should the Security Council approve my recommendation set out in paragraph 45 below with respect to the extension of the mandate of UNMEE, the cost for the maintenance of the Mission during the extension period will be limited to resources approved by the General Assembly.

37. As at 31 March 2007, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNMEE amounted to $47.6 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $1,675.2 million.

38. Reimbursement of troop and contingent-owned equipment costs have been made for the period up to May 2007 and December 2006, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

XIV. Observations

39. The two Algiers Agreements, a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and the Peace Agreement that followed, concluded seven years ago, put an end to years of devastating war and established conditions for the normalization of relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia. They helped lay the foundation for peace between the two countries. The Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities provided for the establishment of the Temporary Security Zone, which allowed the separation of forces and has contributed to the prevention of hostilities. The Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities also renounced the use of force to settle disputes between the parties while creating the conditions necessary for the resolution of the dispute itself. The Peace Agreement that followed addressed the primary cause of the dispute, namely the boundary between Ethiopia and Eritrea. That Agreement provided for the final and binding delimitation and demarcation of the boundary by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission.

40. In the light of the current tense situation prevailing between the two countries, the implementation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities has become even more important. It is essential that both Governments maintain their full commitment to it, including the need to respect the ceasefire and the integrity of the Temporary Security Zone, and refrain from any action that could undermine it or lead to an escalation of tensions between the two countries.

41. I am deeply concerned by the continuing serious violations of the Temporary Security Zone. I urge Eritrea to withdraw its troops and heavy military equipment from the Temporary Security Zone, in order to restore the integrity of the Zone, in compliance with the Algiers Agreements. I also call on Eritrea immediately to lift all the restrictions it has imposed on UNMEE, which was deployed at the request of both countries. Those restrictions have seriously impaired the Mission's ability to implement its monitoring mandate. At the same time, I call on Ethiopia to also take steps to de-escalate the situation by reducing the number of the additional military forces that it has recently introduced in the areas adjacent to the Temporary Security Zone.

42. I am equally deeply concerned by the continued stalemate in the boundary demarcation process. The United Nations remains firmly committed to the full and unconditional implementation of the delimitation decision of 13 April 2002 of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission, as called for by the Security Council in numerous resolutions. I strongly urge both countries to take advantage of the Commission's advice and assistance before it takes action to conclude its work at the end of November.

43. I call on both parties to follow scrupulously the letter and spirit of the Algiers Agreements and to support any initiative that could contribute to the normalization of relations and the restoration of bilateral engagement. I appeal to the leadership of both countries to immediately put an end to the exchange of hostile statements and encourage them and their partners to begin developing confidence-building measures and cooperation in various areas of common interest, such as facilitating access of affected populations to humanitarian assistance; demining; or any other activities that could contribute to lessening the tension and building understanding. It would also be essential to support any other forms of interaction that could contribute to improving relations between the two countries, including regional initiatives.

44. In this regard, it is vitally important and urgent to reactivate the work of the Military Coordination Commission, which remains a unique forum for the discussion of pressing military and security issues.

45. I intend to continue to do everything possible to engage the two countries towards the implementation of the Algiers Agreements, with a view to urgently resolving the stalemate and moving the demarcation process forward. I call on both parties to demonstrate the necessary political will, but I am also obliged to remind them that, ultimately, they bear the primary responsibility for a successful resolution of their border dispute and the establishment of lasting peace between themselves.

46. Despite considerable difficulties in the implementation of its monitoring mandate, UNMEE continues to play an important deterrent role. The presence of the Mission also serves as a demonstration of the international community's commitment to the resolution of this dispute through peaceful means. In view of the role this peacekeeping operation is playing in the maintenance of the ceasefire and the overall stability in the region, I recommend an extension of the Mission's mandate for an additional six months, until 31 January 2008.

47. In conclusion, I wish to express gratitude to all civilian and military personnel of the Mission for their continued commitment, hard work and perseverance in an increasingly dangerous and stressful working environment. I further pay tribute to all the partners of the Mission, including the United Nations country team, humanitarian agencies, Member States, Witnesses to the Algiers Agreements, the Group of Friends of UNMEE, the African Union and other international and regional organizations, for the support they continue to lend to the peace process. I also pay special tribute to the troop-contributing countries for their unwavering support for this important operation.

Annex I

United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea: military contributions as at 1 July 2007

Country	*Military observers*	*Troops*	*Staff*	*Total*	*National support elements*
Algeria	8			8	
Austria	2			2	
Bangladesh	8		5	13	
Bolivia	5			5	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	5			5	
Brazil	7			7	
Bulgaria	4			4	
China	7			7	
Croatia	4			4	
Czech Republic	2			2	
Denmark	3			3	
Finland	5			5	
France	1			1	
Gambia	4		1	5	
Germany	2			2	
Ghana	12		4	16	
Greece	3			3	
Guatemala	5			5	
India	8	701	14	723	
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	3			3	
Jordan	8	560	11	579	
Kenya	10	113	4	127	
Kyrgyzstan	4			4	
Malaysia	7		3	10	
Mongolia	4			4	
Namibia	4		3	7	
Nepal	5			5	
Nigeria	7		2	9	
Norway	3			3	
Pakistan	5			5	
Paraguay	4			4	
Peru	4			4	
Poland	3			3	
Romania	5			5	
Russian Federation	4			4	

Country	*Military observers*	*Troops*	*Staff*	*Total*	*National support elements*
South Africa	3			3	
Spain	3			3	
Sweden	2			2	
Switzerland	1			1	
Tunisia	4		2	6	
Ukraine	3			3	
United Republic of Tanzania	8		2	10	
United States of America	5			5	
Uruguay	5	33	4	42	
Zambia	10		3	13	
Total	**219**	**1 407**	**58**	**1 684**	

Annex II

Twenty-fourth report on the work of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission

1. This is the twenty-fourth report of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission, covering the period from 1 April to 9 July 2007. The previous report covered the period from 21 December 2006 to 31 March 2007.

2. In its previous report dated 30 April 2007 (S/2007/250), the Commission noted that the Parties had not yet proceeded as contemplated in paragraph 22 of the Commission's Statement of 27 November 2006 and that, in particular, they had not by themselves reached the necessary agreement on the emplacement of pillars, nor had they proceeded significantly to implement the Statement or enabled the Commission to resume its activity. The Commission also reiterated its firm commitment, expressed in paragraph 28 of the Statement, that during the 12 months from the issuance of the Statement it will remain willing to provide assistance if the Parties jointly so request and provide assurances of cooperation and security.

3. On 18 April 2007 the Commission sought from the Parties an indication of the progress they had made towards the conclusion of the necessary arrangements either for pillar emplacement by themselves or for requesting the Commission to resume its activity in the manner set out in the Statement.

4. In its reply of 17 May 2007, Eritrea stated that it "stands ready to resume the demarcation of the 13 April 2002 delimitation line as soon as circumstances permit" and stressed its support for the Commission's efforts to identify boundary pillar locations. Eritrea's letter further stated that "the necessary prerequisite for demarcation is Ethiopia's unequivocal acceptance of the Commission's Award and its complete cooperation with the Commission's technical staff". No reply was received from Ethiopia.

5. On 31 May 2007 the Commission wrote to the Parties recalling that six months remained for them to implement the Statement and advising them that at least six months' lead time would be required to enable surveyors and contractors to begin work on the boundary if the Commission were asked to resume its activity. Ethiopia replied by letter on 4 June 2007 indicating that it "has accepted the Commission's delimitation decision of 13 April 2002 without precondition".

6. Encouraged by the replies from the Parties, the Commission decided that it could be constructive to hold a meeting with the Parties to ascertain how, having regard to the various qualifications indicated by each Party, the demarcation process might continue. On 13 June 2007 the Commission wrote to the Parties seeking their views on holding such a meeting. Eritrea, in its reply of 25 June 2007, stated that it was "ready to attend a Commission meeting in a spirit of cooperation". Ethiopia, in its reply of 27 June 2007, stated: "Ethiopia does not believe that the minimum conditions exist for demarcating the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea. However, Ethiopia is prepared, in the hope that such conditions might be created, to attend if you should decide to convene a meeting."

7. The Commission has accordingly decided to hold a meeting with the Parties in September this year, and a letter of invitation to the Parties, together with the

Commission's letter of 13 June 2007 and the Parties' subsequent replies of 25 and 27 June 2007, are attached to this report.

8. Ethiopia continues to default on its obligation to pay its contributions to the Commission's work as required by article 4 (17) of the Algiers Agreement; this refusal was noted in paragraph 5 of the Commission's previous report. In October 2006 the Commission applied to the United Nations Trust Fund for Eritrea and Ethiopia for assistance. In May 2007 the Trust Fund was able to make a contribution which met most, but not all, of the Commission's indebtedness. The expenses of holding the meeting planned for September will once again put the Commission in the red. The Commission wishes to thank once again the donors and Trust Fund administrators for their support in the face of the Commission's financial difficulties. The Commission wishes to reiterate that the fact that it has received such support does not relieve the Parties of their continuing duty to meet the costs of the Commission.

(*Signed*) Sir Elihu **Lauterpacht**
President of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission
9 July 2007

Attachment I

ERITREA ETHIOPIA BOUNDARY COMMISSION

PROFESSOR SIR ELIHU LAUTERPACHT, CBE, QC - PRESIDENT
7 Herschel Road - Cambridge CB3 9AG - United Kingdom
telephone: +44 1223 35 47 07 | *fax*: +44 1223 31 35 45 | *email*: EL14@cam.ac.uk

Professor Lea Brilmayer
Legal Advisor to the Office of the President
P.O. Box 319
Asmara
Eritrea

Mr. B. Donovan Picard
Hunton & Williams LLP
1900 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006-1109

BY E-MAIL

ER/ETH BC 50,194 13 June 2007

Dear Professor Brilmayer,
Dear Mr. Picard,

RE: ERITREA ETHIOPIA BOUNDARY COMMISSION

The Commission has now received from the Representatives of both Parties letters indicating their respective attitudes towards the resumption of the demarcation process.

In her letter to me of 17 May 2007, the Co-Agent for Eritrea has said "The necessary prerequisite for demarcation is Ethiopia's unequivocal acceptance of the Commission's Award and its complete cooperation with the Commission's technical staff."

In his letter to me of 4 June 2007, the Co-Agent for Ethiopia has repeated Ethiopia's acceptance of the Delimitation Decision "without precondition".

Each of these statements stands out as against the various other disagreements expressed in the respective letters. The statements encourage the Commission to ask whether the Parties share the Commission's view that it would be worthwhile to convene a further meeting with the Parties to ascertain how, having regard to the various qualifications that each Party has included in its letters, the Commission may proceed, with the active cooperation of the Parties, to implement the demarcation process.

I would be glad to hear from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Elihu Lauterpacht
President
Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission

Attachment II

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ኣማኻሪ ሕጊ
ቤት ጽሕፈት ፡ፕሪሲደንት

دولة إرتيريا
المستشار القانوني
لمكتب الرئيس

THE STATE OF ERITREA
LEGAL ADVISOR TO THE
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

President Sir Elihu Lauterpacht
Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission
Permanent Court of Arbitration
The Hague, The Netherlands

25 June 2007

Dear President Lauterpacht:

Thank you for your letter of 13 June 2007 regarding the Boundary Commission's desire to recommence demarcation of the 13 April 2002 delimitation line, and for the Commission's inquiry concerning the Parties' readiness to attend a meeting in support of that objective.

I must note that the Government of Eritrea is not confident that Ethiopia plans to cooperate with demarcation in accordance with the Commission's Delimitation Award. Eritrea's skepticism is based on both Ethiopia's five-year history of noncompliance with the Boundary Commission's orders and its recent public statements indicating that it is not prepared to demarcate the 13 April 2002 boundary. Counsel for Ethiopia's letter to the Commission of 4 June 2007 falls far short of acceptance without preconditions of the boundary recognized on 13 April 2002, as does Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin's letter of 8 June 2007 to the President of the United Nations Security Council.

Eritrea is nonetheless ready to attend a Commission meeting in a spirit of cooperation. We fully support the Commission's objective of definitive demarcation on the ground in accordance with the two Algiers Agreements and the Commission's "final and binding" Delimitation Award.

Sincerely yours,

Legal Advisor to the Office of the President of Eritrea
Asmara, Eritrea

Attachment III

HUNTON& WILLIAMS

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B. DONOVAN PICARD
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FILE NO: 65641-3

June 27, 2007

Professor Sir Elihu Lauterpacht
President Eritrea/Ethiopia Boundary Commission
Permanent Court of Arbitration
Peace Palace Carnegieplein 2
2517 KJ The Hague
Netherlands

Dear President Lauterpacht:

I have transmitted your letter of 13 June 2007 to the Government and would like to convey the Government's observations.

As these communications are being exchanged, the reality on the ground is that the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) has been completely violated by Eritrea. For all intents and purposes, there is no TSZ to speak of.

One of the cornerstones of the Algiers Agreements is the mandate given to UNMEE by the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities to monitor the TSZ and to create conducive security conditions for both the demarcation of the boundary and a comprehensive settlement of the conflict between the two countries. Paragraphs 9, 12, 13, 14 of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities are particularly pertinent in this regard. Paragraph 12 says in part that in order "to contribute to the reduction of tension and to the establishment of a climate of calm and confidence, as well as to create conditions conducive to a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the conflict through delimitation and demarcation of the border, the Eritrean forces shall remain at a distance of 25 km (artillery range) from positions to which Ethiopian forces shall redeploy in accordance with paragraph 4 of this document. This zone of separation shall be referred to in this document as the "Temporary Security Zone."[1]

Paragraph 14 (C) of the Agreement mandates UNMEE to ensure security within the TSZ by means of "deployment to and continuous monitoring by military units of the peacekeeping mission at posts in key and sensitive positions within the temporary security zone in order to monitor the implementation of the commitments made by both parties in paragraphs 9 and 12..."

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[1] Paragraph 9 reads as follow: "Ethiopia shall submit redeployment plans for its troops from positions taken after 6 February 1999, and which were not under Ethiopian administration before 6 May 1998, to the Peacekeeping Mission. This redeployment shall be completed within two weeks after the deployment of the Peacekeeping Mission and verified by it."

Obviously, UNMEE is today not in a position to do anything in terms of providing security in the TSZ and along the common border, all the more because now Eritrea has in fact began to carry out infiltration inside Ethiopia with the express aim of destabilizing Ethiopia. Inside the TSZ the roles of UNMEE and Eritrean troops have been reversed -- now Eritrean troops are monitoring UNMEE.

Under these circumstances, it is impossible to imagine that one would be able to carry out demarcation. In Ethiopia's view, even the bare minimum security conditions for demarcation are absent both within the TSZ and along the common border where, in the absence of a buffer zone, the two armies are eyeball to eyeball. The infiltration by Eritrean troops inside Ethiopia and the acts of destabilization by Eritrea have exacerbated the security situation. That is precisely why Ethiopia has asked the Security Council to discharge its obligation under paragraph 14 (a) of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities by taking measures against Eritrea under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charters for its violation of its commitment under paragraph 12 of that Agreement.

To reiterate, Ethiopia does not believe that the minimum conditions exist for demarcating the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea. However, Ethiopia is prepared, in the hope that such conditions might be created, to attend if you should decide to convene a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

B. Donovan Picard

B. Donovan Picard
Legal Counsel for the
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Attachment IV

ERITREA ETHIOPIA BOUNDARY COMMISSION

PROFESSOR SIR ELIHU LAUTERPACHT, CBE, QC - PRESIDENT
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Mr. B. Donovan Picard
Hunton & Williams LLP
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Washington, DC 20006-1109

BY E-MAIL

10 July 2007

Dear Professor Brilmayer,
Dear Mr. Picard,

RE: ERITREA ETHIOPIA BOUNDARY COMMISSION

I wish to acknowledge both Eritrea's letter to me of 17 May 2007 declaring that Eritrea "stands ready to resume the demarcation of the 13 April 2002 delimitation line as soon as circumstances permit" and its letter of 25 June 2007 stating that Eritrea is "ready to attend a Commission meeting in a spirit of cooperation", as well as Ethiopia's letter to me of 27 June 2007 declaring that "Ethiopia does not believe that the minimum conditions exist for demarcating the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea. However, Ethiopia is prepared, in the hope that such conditions might be created, to attend if you should decide to convene a meeting."

In view of these responses, the Commission has decided to convene a meeting in New York with the Parties beginning at 10:00 am on 6 September 2007. The meeting will be held at the offices of the Secretary of the Commission.

The purpose of the meeting will be to consider how pillars may be erected along the line set out in the Annex to the Commission's Statement of 27 November 2006 taking into account the need to overcome the problems referred to in paragraphs 10 and 11 of the Commission's Statement of 27 November 2006.

The Commission looks forward to this meeting with the representatives of the Parties. It hopes that they will come with sufficient authority to be able to agree upon the measures necessary to fulfill the purpose of the meeting, in particular that both Parties fully co-operate without conditions with the Commission, and take all necessary action to enable its demarcation teams to perform their functions.

Please confirm at your earliest convenience that your appropriately authorised representatives will attend the meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Elihu Lauterpacht
President
Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission

United Nations A/61/1004–S/2007/441

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
20 July 2007

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General Assembly
Sixty-first session
Agenda items 27, 33 49, 50, 51, 55, 69 (a), 98 and 99

Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

Sport for peace and development

Information and communication technologies for development

Macroeconomic policy questions

Globalization and interdependence

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Crime prevention and criminal justice

International drug control

Security Council
Sixty-second year

Letter dated 17 July 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour, in my capacity as Permanent Representative of the country chairing the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), to transmit summary information on the outcomes of the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of CIS, which was held in Kazakhstan on 25 April 2007 (see annex I) and the meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of CIS, which was held in Ukraine on 25 May 2007 (see annex II).

07-43308 (E) 300707 310707

I would appreciate it if the present letter and its annexes could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 27, 33, 49, 50, 51, 55, 69 (a), 98 and 99, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Byrganym **Aitimova**

Annex I to the letter dated 17 July 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Information on the outcome of the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Commonwealth of Independent States

The regular meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was held on 25 April 2007 in Astana (the Republic of Kazakhstan).

The official delegations of all 12 Commonwealth member States took part in the meeting. It was chaired by the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Marat Mukhanbetkazievich Tazhin.

In the course of the meeting, two documents were agreed and submitted for consideration to the Council of Heads of State and seven documents for consideration to the Council of Heads of Government. A total of 17 items were included on the agenda for the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers.

The participants in the meeting discussed and approved the draft agenda for the regular meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government.

The results of cooperation within the framework of the multi-level consultations among Foreign Ministries in 2006 and the plan for holding them in 2007 were discussed at the meeting. The reports on the activities of the CIS Cultural Cooperation Council and the Inter-State Council on Natural and Man-Made Emergency Situations were considered.

These Councils are some of the most active and effective bodies for sectoral cooperation by CIS member States. The Cultural Cooperation Council conducted 21 meetings, which were held in almost all the CIS member States. At its meetings, the Council considered approximately 300 questions concerning prospects for cooperation in the field of culture and the creation of favourable conditions for developing cultural ties and cultural exchanges.

The Council's further activities are to focus on solving existing problems, including improving the treaty and legal basis for activities, searching for new forms of and mechanisms for cooperation, implementing joint creative projects, holding joint forums, festivals and conferences, developing the joint production of films, and restoring old and establishing new creative links among the Commonwealth States.

The Inter-State Council on Natural and Man-Made Emergency Situations is also working successfully. In the course of its work, the Council has held 20 meetings, at which approximately 480 issues were discussed. The Commonwealth's highest bodies adopted 18 documents at the Council's initiative or with its participation.

Approximately 60 documents were adopted by the Council. Intersectoral cooperation with councils on health care, hydrometeorology and industrial safety

and the Coordination Council on the Problems of Disaster Medicine is being developed.

In accordance with a decision by the Council, since 1998 specialists from the Ministries for Emergency Situations of CIS member States have been trained at the base of the Civil Protection Academy and the Fire Safety Academy of the Russian Ministry for Emergency Situations. Since 2003, rescue workers have been trained at the base of the Institute for Retraining and Advanced Training under the Belarus Ministry for Emergency Situations.

Three working structures were set up and are in operation under the Council: the CIS Corps of Forces to Eliminate the Consequences of Natural and Man-Made Emergency Situations, which is composed of 363 emergency rescue and special equipment units and 2,052 specialist rescue workers from CIS member States; the Scientific Council on the Problems of Preventing and Eliminating Emergency Situations; and the CIS Agency for the Monitoring and Forecasting of Emergency Situations.

Three draft documents on the agenda were discussed upon the proposal of the Council of Border Troop Commanders.

A draft protocol on approving the regulations on the organization of cooperation by the border and other agencies of CIS member States in providing assistance in the occurrence and for the resolution (elimination) of crisis situations on external borders was adopted. The regulations define the bases for the organization of and a mechanism for cooperation, the procedure for carrying out joint measures and resolving disputes, as well as the legal status of the group.

A draft decision on introducing the "Honourable CIS border guard" lapel badge of the Council of Border Troop Commanders was considered and approved.

The question of the draft decision on approving the regulations on grants from the Council of Border Troop Commanders for auditors and students from the educational institutions of CIS member States' border agencies is also of no small importance. Fifty auditors and students from the higher educational institutions of the border agencies of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Ukraine have already received such grants (on average, 7 to 10 persons per academic year).

In 2006, 53,000 Russian rubles were awarded to grant recipients, and, for 2007, it is estimated that expenditures for this purpose will amount to 78,000 rubles (nine candidates).

Two agenda items concerned the Collective Peacekeeping Forces (CPF) in the Commonwealth.

A document was considered and approved, which had been drawn up for the purpose of ensuring the security and protection of the personnel of the Collective Peacekeeping Forces in conducting peacekeeping operations in the territories of CIS member States and which provides for a set of measures aimed at maintaining the Forces in a state of combat readiness and creating favourable conditions enabling them to carry out the assigned tasks of their mission as well as strengthening the social and legal protection of the Forces' personnel and the members of their families.

At the same time, the proposal by the Council of Ministers of Defence to extend the mandate of the CPF commander in the conflict zone in Abkhazia, Georgia, Major General Sergei Jakovlevich Chaban, pending agreement by the Council of Foreign Ministers on the candidacy of the CPF commander in the conflict zone, was not supported by the Georgian party.

A draft decision by the Council of Heads of Government on the establishment of a council of directors of State and public television and radio organizations of CIS member States was also approved at the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in order to ensure interaction and cooperation on the part of Commonwealth member States in the area of television and radio broadcasting, the strengthening of good-neighbourly relations among peoples, and the development of a common CIS information space.

At its meeting, the Council of Foreign Ministers considered a draft agreement on the training of personnel for the internal affairs agencies (police) and internal security troops of the CIS member States. The agreement is designed to ensure a high level of personnel training for the internal affairs agencies (police) and internal security troops that meets the challenges and threats of the contemporary world and to create effective mechanisms for cooperation in this area.

The adoption of the decision to grant the Retraining and Advanced Training Institute under the Belarus Ministry for Emergency Situations the status of the basic organization of the CIS member States for training personnel in the prevention and elimination of emergency situations will make it possible to strengthen its status legally in view of the fact that approximately 300 specialists from all CIS States (except Georgia and the Republic of Uzbekistan) have received retraining and advanced training at the Institute's base since 2003.

The decisions adopted to approve the regulations on the basic organization of the CIS member States for the training and retraining of personnel for the tax (financial) investigation agencies and to grant the Economic Security Academy of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Financial Police Academy of the Kazakhstan Agency for Combating Economic and Corruption-related Crime (the financial police) the status of the basic Commonwealth organizations for the training and retraining of personnel for those agencies will make it possible to train highly qualified specialists in combating economic crimes for the tax (financial) investigation agencies of the CIS member States.

At its meeting, the Council of Foreign Ministers also approved the draft decision on the recommendations of the Consultative Committee of the Legal Services Directors of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the CIS member States.

In addition, a group of CIS member States adopted a statement on the situation regarding the Soldier-Liberator Monument in Tallinn. The statement expressed profound concern in connection with the plans of the Government of Estonia to transfer the burial site of the soldiers of different nationalities who had given their lives for the liberation of Europe from fascism and to dismantle the Monument. The hope was also expressed that the Government of Estonia would demonstrate a respectful attitude towards history and the memory of the fallen warriors.

Annex II to the letter dated 17 July 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Information on the outcome of the meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Commonwealth of Independent States

The regular meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was held on 25 May 2007 in Yalta (Ukraine) in the Livadia Palace. The official delegations of all 12 Commonwealth member States took part in the meeting.

Twenty-four documents were adopted at the CIS Council of Heads of Government meeting.

The Agreement on the formation of a common electrical energy market for the CIS member States was one of the major items on the Council's agenda.

The formation of a CIS common electrical energy market will make it possible to increase the volume of trade in electrical energy, ensure the reliability of the electrical energy supply and the quality of service provided to consumers, optimize the use of fuel-energy and hydropower resources in the electrical power industry and harmonize the processes of reforming the electrical energy sector in the Commonwealth States.

The main objective of the set of joint CIS measures considered by the heads of State for preventing the emergence and spread of bird flu in the territories of the CIS member States is to join forces to prevent its emergence and spread there and to minimize the economic damage caused by possible outbreaks of bird flu by means of speedy containment and elimination.

Ensuring security is one of the priority areas for cooperation within the Commonwealth. The Council's agenda included consideration of the question of drawing up draft inter-State programmes of joint measures to combat crime and illegal trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors for the period 2008-2010.

Two agenda items concerned the Collective Peacekeeping Forces (CPF) in the Commonwealth. Documents were considered and approved which had been drawn up for the purpose of ensuring the security and protection of CPF personnel in conducting peacekeeping operations in the territories of CIS countries and which provide for a set of measures aimed at maintaining the Forces in a state of combat readiness and creating favourable conditions enabling them to carry out the assigned tasks of their mission as well as strengthening the social and legal protection of the Forces' personnel and the members of their families.

The heads of Government also considered a draft agreement on the training of personnel for the internal affairs agencies (police) and internal security troops of the CIS member States. The agreement is designed to ensure a high level of personnel training for the internal affairs agencies (police) and internal security troops that meets the challenges and threats of the contemporary world and to create effective mechanisms for cooperation in this area.

The adoption of the decision to grant the Institute for Retraining and Advanced Training under the Belarus Ministry for Emergency Situations the status of the basic organization of the CIS member States for training personnel in the prevention and elimination of emergency situations will make it possible to strengthen its status legally in view of the fact that approximately 300 specialists from all CIS States (except Georgia and the Republic of Uzbekistan) have received retraining and advanced training at the Institute's base since 2003.

The decisions adopted to approve the regulations on the basic organization of the CIS member States for the training and retraining of personnel for the tax (financial) investigation agencies and to grant the Economic Security Academy of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Financial Police Academy of the Kazakhstan Agency for Combating Economic and Corruption-related Crime (the financial police) the status of the basic Commonwealth organizations for the training and retraining of personnel for those agencies will make it possible to train highly qualified specialists in combating economic crimes for the tax (financial) investigation agencies of the CIS member States.

The decision adopted on approving the regulations on grants from the Council of Border Troop Commanders for auditors and students from the educational institutions of CIS member States' border agencies is also of no small importance. Fifty auditors and students from the higher educational institutions of the border agencies of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Ukraine have already received such grants (on average, 7 to 10 persons per academic year).

In 2006, 53,000 Russian rubles were awarded to grant recipients, and, for 2007, it is estimated that expenditures for this purpose will amount to 78,000 rubles (nine candidates).

A draft decision by the Council of Heads of Government on the establishment of a council of directors of State and public television and radio organizations of CIS member States was also approved at the meeting in order to ensure interaction and cooperation on the part of CIS member States in the area of television and radio broadcasting, the strengthening of good-neighbourly relations among peoples, and the development of a common CIS information space.

The Agreement of the CIS member States on cooperation in the area of physical training and sport also relates to the field of humanitarian cooperation. The implementation of its provisions will promote the development of equitable, mutually advantageous cooperation in the field of physical training and sport through the State agencies of the parties, national Olympic committees, national sport federations (alliances and associations), and international, regional and other physical-training and sport organizations and associations and support their initiatives aimed at the effective development of physical training, sport and the Olympic movement.

The question of holding the VII International Sporting Games of the CIS member States in 2008 in Chisinau, placed on the agenda by Moldova, was a further "athletic" agenda item. The initiative received support within the Council of Heads of Government.

The agenda also included a number of items relating to cooperation in the field of education. For example, the draft agreement on cooperation in the field of the

advanced training and professional retraining of specialists provides for granting citizens permanently residing in the territories of the parties equal rights to advanced training and professional retraining and for promoting the development of direct links and the exchange of work experience among educational institutions engaged in the advanced training and professional retraining of specialists.

There has long been a need to take measures to regulate and monitor the quality of educational activities, including the licensing, certification and State accreditation of educational institutions and also the recognition of State documents. Such measures are also provided for in the draft agreement.

Two agenda items relate to the activities of the Inter-State Humanitarian Cooperation Fund of the CIS member States.

Draft documents define the shared participation by States in supporting the Fund's Executive Board as well as a mechanism establishing the level of remuneration of the Fund's Executive Director and the Board's staff.

The Commonwealth heads of Government also took decisions on the dates and venue of their next meeting. The proposal by Turkmenistan to hold the next regular meeting on 22 November 2007 in Ashgabat was adopted.

Ukraine undertook the chairmanship of the Council of Heads of Government in the person of that country's Prime Minister, Victor Fedorovich Janukovich.

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Report of the Secretary-General on the request of Nepal for United Nations assistance in support of its peace process

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1740 (2007) in which the Council established the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN). In response to the formal request by the Government of Nepal and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), or CPN(M), for United Nations support for the peace process, UNMIN was established as a special political mission with a mandate to monitor the management of the arms and armed personnel of CPN(M) and the Nepal Army, assist in monitoring ceasefire arrangements, provide technical support for the conduct of the election of a Constituent Assembly in a free and fair atmosphere and provide a small team of electoral monitors.

2. The report reviews the progress of the peace process and the implementation by UNMIN of its mandate since my report to the Council of 26 April 2007 (S/2007/235) and assesses the continuing challenges facing Nepal as it attempts to achieve a historic transition.

II. Progress of the peace process

3. As I indicated in my previous report, Nepal's peace process has registered major achievements, including in the first three months after the establishment of UNMIN. Among the main accomplishments were the promulgation of an interim Constitution and the formation of an interim legislature-parliament and an interim Government, both of which include Maoist members and ministers. During this period and since, however, the process has encountered significant challenges. In the latter half of April it became clear that the Constituent Assembly election, which under the interim Constitution was to take place by mid-June 2007, would have to be postponed. This was largely due to the difficulties encountered by the governing eight-party alliance in reaching agreement on the electoral framework and necessary legislation. On 12 April, the Election Commission stated that the election could not be held until at least 110 days from the passage of all relevant election legislation, making a June election impossible and in effect requiring a postponement until after the June-to-September monsoon season. The Election Commission also drew attention to the need for the creation of adequate security conditions for the election and for political agreement on ensuring adequate representation of traditionally

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marginalized groups in the electoral process. The announcement had the effect of stalling the political process for a period of time, with some parties reluctant to acknowledge publicly that a credible June election was no longer feasible. This also led to accusations and counter-accusations within the eight-party governing coalition regarding the responsibility for the failure to hold the election within the agreed period.

4. The situation in Nepal's southern plains, the Terai region, remained highly restive in the aftermath of the sometimes violent protest movement from January to March 2007, in particular following the killing of 27 Maoists in Gaur by supporters of the Madhesi People's Rights Forum (MPRF) on 21 March and earlier clashes between Madhesi protestors and the police. The security situation in the Terai has remained extremely disturbed, and efforts to improve law and order in the region have been halting at best. Frequent clashes continue to occur between Maoist and Madhesi activists in the Terai as they compete for political space. Several armed secessionist groups in the Terai, including three factions of the Jantantrik Terai Mukti Morcha (JTMM), the Madhesi Tigers and the Terai Cobra, have continued to challenge both the Maoists and the State. Eight CPN(M) cadres were killed in June and early July, with one or other faction of JTMM often claiming responsibility. Fear among Pahadis (hill-origin settlers) in the Terai has increased, and some Pahadi families have fled, or been forced to flee, their homes to safer areas in order to escape militant Madhesi groups. The possibility of more widespread communal violence remains a concern.

5. Little dialogue had taken place between the Government and MPRF during the April to May period. Madhesi legislators in the interim legislature-parliament began to disrupt parliamentary proceedings from 18 April onward, aggrieved by the recommendations of the Election Constituency Delineation Commission (ECDC) on the drawing of boundaries for new constituencies in the Terai. This disruption, which Maoist and other legislators joined, resulted in further delay in the passage of necessary constitutional amendments and electoral legislation.

6. As a backlash against intimidation of Pahadi citizens and concessions or potential concessions to Madhesi groups, a new Pahadi group, the Chure Bhawar Ekta Samaj (CBES), has emerged in the northern areas of the central Terai, demanding a Chure federal state encompassing some of the Terai's most resource-rich areas. The group led a series of protests in late April, blocking key access routes.

7. There were also disturbances in the western Terai, an area where the indigenous Tharu community is concentrated. Many Tharus suffer from extreme poverty and are landless, a result of the practice of bonded labour (*kamaiya*). Although the practice was banned in 2000, many former *kamaiyas* remain essentially homeless and have consequently squatted on Government property. Following the Government's decision to deploy the Armed Police Force to the border areas to control cross-border crime, an attempt by the Force to evict some *kamaiya* families who had occupied Government property led to clashes beginning on 1 May, involving the Maoist Young Communist League (YCL) and a Tharu group. Protesters attacked local district administration offices in several western districts, assaulting Government officers and burning property.

8. Land issues have been and can be expected to continue to be highly contentious. Under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the parties committed

themselves to returning Government, public and private buildings, land and other properties, as well as to adopting a programme of land reform and to providing land to socially and economically disadvantaged classes, including landless squatters, bonded labourers and pastoral farmers. On several occasions, however, local Maoist cadres have resisted the implementation of commitments made publicly by the Maoist leadership to return seized property and have even seized additional property. The Nepali Congress Party has made it clear that fulfilment by CPN(M) of these commitments is one of its central concerns in the peace process.

9. YCL attracted intense criticism during this period from the other seven parties in the governing alliance and from many civil society groups. While the Maoists maintain that YCL is engaged only in peaceful political and civic activities and in assisting with law enforcement, others have accused the group of acting essentially as a militia engaging in parallel quasi-policing activities and widespread intimidation, noting that former Maoist army commanders are in YCL leadership positions. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Nepal has documented the recurring use of violence and intimidation by YCL, which has overshadowed its legitimate activities. At the same time, OHCHR has observed that criticism by CPN(M) of police inaction to address crime, corruption and law and order, which echoes broad concerns within the population as a whole, must be addressed.

10. The lack of progress on a range of issues also impeded the monitoring by UNMIN of the Maoist army in accordance with the agreement on monitoring the management of arms and armies. The leadership of CPN(M) would not agree to the Mission's commencing the second stage of registration of CPN(M) personnel, involving verification of the age and date of recruitment of those registered at the first stage, until agreement was reached with the Government on other issues. This is a crucial stage of the implementation of the agreement, in particular as regards the commitment to discharge those who were under 18 years of age on 25 May 2006 and to ensure that all who remain in cantonments were recruited to the Maoist army before that date. CPN(M) insisted on prior progress by the Government in improving cantonment conditions. The poor conditions in the cantonments remained a persistent concern, especially during monsoon rains, and even pre-monsoon weather conditions had led to personnel leaving cantonments to take temporary shelter in nearby villages. CPN(M) also linked the beginning of verification to the payment of allowances by the Government to its personnel in the cantonments and to the establishment of the special committee envisaged in article 146 of the interim Constitution to supervise, integrate and rehabilitate the combatants of the Maoist army.

11. Late May and early June saw significant progress in terms of the willingness of the eight parties and the interim Government to end the political stalemate and to tackle outstanding problems on several fronts. On 31 May, the eight parties met for the first time since mid-April and agreed that the Constituent Assembly election should be held no later than mid-December 2007. Key grievances of Madhesi legislators were addressed by the establishment of a judicial commission to investigate the violence during the Madhesi movement and by agreement that the recommendations of Election Constituency Delineation Commission on constituency boundaries would be reviewed. As a result, Madhesi legislators ended their campaign of disrupting Parliament. The eight parties agreed to a series of amendments to the interim Constitution, including new provisions empowering the

interim legislature-parliament to abolish the monarchy by a two-thirds majority if the King were deemed to be conspiring against the election and to remove the Prime Minister, also by a two-thirds vote. The interim legislature-parliament passed the amendments on 13 June.

12. The more positive developments in June included the beginning of a formal dialogue between the Government and MPRF. Initial talks were held in the Terai town of Janakpur on 1 June, during which the two sides reached agreement on a number of issues. However, some of the major demands of MPRF were left for further discussions. The Government similarly reopened talks with the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), representing Janajati groups. NEFIN has demanded a fully proportional election for the Constituent Assembly and guarantees for representation of all ethnic groups. Both sets of talks, as well as talks with CBES, are continuing. Representatives of traditionally marginalized groups have expressed concerns about the pace of the talks and the willingness of the Government to deliver on commitments already made.

13. On 14 June, the interim legislature-parliament passed the key electoral legislation, the Constituent Assembly Members Election Act. This retains a mixed system, as previously written into the interim Constitution, under which 480 members are to be elected through two separate but simultaneous election races. In one race, the country is divided into 240 constituencies, with voters in each constituency electing one representative on the basis of a simple majority of votes — a first-past-the-post electoral system. In the second race, parties win a share of a further 240 seats in proportion to their nationwide share of the votes — a proportional representation system. An additional 17 members will be appointed by the interim Government, and the Constituent Assembly will therefore comprise 497 members. Independent candidates may run in the constituency race but not in the proportional representation race. In the proportional representation race, the parties will select their winning candidates after the results are known, and a complex quota system prescribes the extent to which each party needs to include members of marginalized groups when nominating candidates and when making its final selection of winning candidates. Groups that need to be represented in the process are Madhesis, Dalits, marginalized castes and ethnic groups, and persons from districts with very low development indicators. Half of each party's candidates in the proportional representation race and at least one third of all candidates proposed by a party for both races together must be women. It is unclear whether this formula will enjoy broad support from the marginalized communities, whose demand for a fully proportional system has been strong; ensuring that the quota system is operated in a fair, transparent and binding manner will be essential to such support. After consultations with the Election Commission, on 24 June the interim Government declared 22 November 2007 as the election date.

14. The eight-party agreement of 31 May and related discussions created an environment that was more conducive to renewed efforts on cantonment-related issues. The Government disbursed funds to construct better shelter for 15,000 personnel in the camps. It also agreed to provide an allowance of 3,000 rupees per month per person for those in the cantonments, and delivered the first tranche of this payment to the senior-most Maoist minister. The Maoist leadership agreed to proceed with the Mission's second phase of registration and verification, which was then scheduled to begin on 14 June. A series of killings in the Terai of Maoists by Madhesi groups led to a further short postponement. Verification at the first main

Maoist cantonment site began on 19 June and was completed on 26 June, with the results were presented to the Maoist leadership. Discussions with the Maoist leadership about the results and their implementation, as well as the resolution of disputes regarding those ruled ineligible, delayed the beginning of verification at the second site. UNMIN has urged the Maoists and their partners in the interim Government to reach a clear understanding on payment and other modalities for those personnel discharged after being ruled ineligible.

III. Build-up of the United Nations Mission in Nepal

15. Following the General Assembly's approval, in its resolution 61/258, of the Mission's 2007 budget of $88,822,000, UNMIN moved promptly to expand its operations. Since UNMIN is a focused political mission of limited duration, efforts have been made to expedite recruitment and personnel procedures to allow the Mission to be effectively staffed in the face of developing political events. Nevertheless, the existing rules and regulations regarding personnel, procurement and delegation of authority do not lend themselves easily to the rapid start-up of a mission of short duration such as UNMIN. The Mission has supported the work of a best practices officer to analyse how lessons learned from UNMIN might positively influence the start-up of future missions.

16. As at 9 July, 507 of the planned 1,073 staff were in their posts. The only category of staff with regard to which UNMIN has not sought the earliest possible recruitment is that of the 167 United Nations Volunteers to be deployed as district electoral advisers, together with their local support staff. Their deployment was deferred pending decisions on a new election date, but is now in process. Of 357 civilian staff, 92 — 27 per cent — are women. A further breakdown of this figure indicates that in substantive areas, 37 per cent of international civilian staff are female, while in administration, 17 per cent are female. Among arms monitors, only 12 of 150 are women, despite appeals to Member States to nominate women candidates. Special emphasis has been placed on ensuring that the composition of national staff reflects the diversity of Nepal, with vigorous efforts being made to recruit from traditionally marginalized communities.

17. Negotiations with the Government of Nepal on a status-of-mission agreement are at an advanced stage, and it is hoped that such an agreement will be signed in the near future. The Government has provided facilities in Kathmandu and regional locations, and has offered excellent support in facilitating the transit of goods and personnel as they have arrived in Nepal. In mid-June, the Mission headquarters relocated to facilities provided by the Government at the Birendra International Convention Centre in Kathmandu. Regional offices have started to function with partial occupancy in Nepalgunj, Biratnagar and Pokhara; the office in Dhangadhi is expected to become operational by mid-July. I am grateful for the excellent cooperation that UNMIN continues to receive from the Government of Nepal.

IV. Activities of the United Nations Mission in Nepal

A. Arms monitoring

18. Around-the-clock monitoring has continued at the weapons storage areas of all seven Maoist army main cantonment sites throughout the reporting period. Conditions at the cantonments remain difficult for UNMIN monitors as well as for the Maoist army, but they have recently improved with the provision of prefabricated offices, ablution facilities, office tents and diesel-fuelled generators. The communications system is considered to be satisfactory. The current monsoon conditions are having an impact on arms monitoring operations, and priority is being given to ensuring the safety and security of the monitors despite the onset of heavy seasonal rains. Contingency planning is taking place, and stores are being built up at each main cantonment to be used in the event of access difficulties related to flooding or other severe weather.

19. The significant increase in personnel and equipment has allowed monitoring to be extended beyond the main cantonment sites. Patrols are conducted to inspect both Maoist satellite cantonment sites and the barracks of the Nepal Army at all levels. Constructive liaison has been established with commanders, and monitors have been able to extend their patrols to visit local government officials, non-governmental organizations and United Nations field locations. In addition to the teams located at the main Maoist cantonment sites, each sector has established mobile teams for general patrolling and incident investigation. As at 5 July, 33 investigations had been carried out, with their reports submitted to the Joint Monitoring Coordinating Committee. The Committee has continued to meet regularly, usually twice a week, under the chairmanship of the Chief Arms Monitor, in an atmosphere of good cooperation between the Nepal Army and the Maoist army, and between each of them and UNMIN.

20. Joint monitoring teams, comprising one United Nations monitor, one Maoist army monitor and one Nepal Army monitor, have become operational following a period of training and preparation. All 10 teams were deployed to the sectors at the beginning of June, with two teams allocated to each sector. Their deployment represents a significant step forward in monitoring operations. It is hoped that these joint teams will further strengthen the sense of ownership in the peace process by both parties to the agreement and will contribute to building public confidence. Initial results are positive, and in time the teams will be tasked with investigative responsibilities for more complex incidents.

21. Laying the groundwork for the second phase of registration and verification of Maoist army personnel was at the forefront of planning and logistical preparation throughout the period. Once CPN(M) confirmed that it was ready to start the process after significant delays at the political level, UNMIN personnel, together with staff members of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) participating in the verification teams, were deployed to the main cantonment site at Ilam, where the process began on 19 June and was completed on 26 June. The teams work successively at each of the seven main cantonment sites, with logistics preparations taking place at one site while the process is completed at the preceding site. The time required to complete the process will depend on the cooperation of the Maoist army and the local administration, as well as on weather and operational constraints.

22. With the arrival of 28 retired military arms monitors in late June and during July, the Arms Monitoring Office will reach its full strength of 186. Five senior military officers have been appointed as sector commanders, following a period of training and familiarization. Two of those officers are serving as senior liaison officers in Pokhara and Dhangadhi pending the establishment of two new sectors.

B. Mine action

23. Under the supervision of the UNMIN Mine Action Unit, ArmorGroup, the company contracted to monitor the storage process of improvised explosive devices, has made visits to all seven main cantonment sites, where a full inventory of stored items was made and all items were categorized as either unsafe to store (category 1) or safe to store (category 2). Concurrent with the inventory process, ArmorGroup also trained a number of Maoist army combatants — 74 men and 3 women — in the safe handling of explosives, firefighting, demolition practice safety and storage enhancement.

24. The inventory counted 6,789 kg of net explosive quantity stored, comprising about 52,000 different items of explosive remnants of war, including improvised explosive devices, detonators, detonator cord and other items. The inventory highlighted the poor condition of most improvised explosive devices and bulk explosives. ArmorGroup has reported that in excess of 90 per cent of items are unsafe to store (category 1) and should be destroyed as soon as conditions permit. In early July, the Mine Action Unit presented the inventory findings to Joint Monitoring Coordinating Committee, which agreed to move forward with the destruction of category 1 improvised explosive devices at the Maoist cantonment sites. ArmorGroup teams are undertaking the coordination tasks required to facilitate demolition at each site, including site risk mitigation, demolition site preparation and coordination with key Maoist personnel.

25. On 1 June 2007, a major explosion occurred in one of the satellite camps connected to main cantonment site 7. An investigation was unable to fully resolve divergent reports concerning the cause of the accident and the explosives involved. Fortunately, it appears that there were no casualties. The incident was a reminder of the constant danger associated with the storage of explosives and underscored the fact that not all improvised explosive devices were made known during the inventory process.

26. An extension of the ArmorGroup contract has been funded through the United Nations peace fund to address the Nepal Army's need for mine action training to ensure that it can fulfil its obligations under the agreement on monitoring the management of arms and armies. This will cover the cost of providing two instructors to train the Nepal Army 14th Brigade explosive ordnance disposal unit in manual mine clearance.

27. On the recommendation of UNMIN, a Cabinet decision has been taken to establish a national mine action authority, consisting of an inter-ministerial steering committee with strategic policy responsibility and a mine action centre with implementation responsibility, both under the auspices of the Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction. The Mine Action Unit, together with UNICEF, has been liaising closely with the Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction and other relevant ministries with regard to the structure and future activities of the national authority. Further

support to the establishment of a national programme will be needed as the national authority takes shape, and UNMIN continues to support the efforts of the Government to find solutions to the serious problem of landmines and explosive remnants of war.

C. Electoral support

28. The UNMIN Electoral Assistance Office continued to provide technical assistance and advice to the Election Commission at all levels. The Office has provided advice on proposed legislation and participated in the drafting of codes of conduct, and it is currently working on developing regulations in light of the recently passed Constituency Assembly Members Election Act. Advisers from the Electoral Assistance Office also participated in the preparation of training and voter education materials, the development of a comprehensive logistics plan for the distribution and retrieval of materials, the drafting of media directives and the preparation of formulas for the tabulation of results. The Office provided advice in the establishment of the Election Commission's regional resource centres in five regions and will, in cooperation with Commission, undertake training for resource centre staff.

29. Following the decision by the eight parties on the timing of the Constituent Assembly election, UNMIN, in consultation and agreement with the Election Commission, requested the United Nations Volunteers programme to proceed with the recruitment of district electoral advisers. The first phase of deployment will consist of 48 international and 24 national Volunteers based in 28 districts, from where they will be able to cover an additional 31 districts. In all, 59 of Nepal's 75 districts will thus receive assistance and advice of UNMIN district electoral advisers from mid-July; the remaining deployment to less accessible districts is scheduled for September, at the end of the monsoon season.

30. The five-member Electoral Expert Monitoring Team, headed by Rafael López-Pintor, began its first 10-day monitoring assessment in Nepal between 11 and 25 June. The Team consulted with a broad range of national stakeholders, including the Election Commission, the Government, members of the interim legislature-parliament, the political parties, civil society and human rights organizations and the media, as well as with representatives of the diplomatic community and international observer groups. The Team has submitted its first report to me, and I have shared it with the Government of Nepal and the Election Commission. The report assesses the electoral process based on benchmarks which revolve around the democratic principles enshrined in article 25 of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: genuine periodic elections; universal and equal suffrage; the right to stand for public office; and the right to vote by secret ballot, allowing for the free expression of the will of the people.

D. Civil affairs

31. During the reporting period, the Civil Affairs Office developed and implemented a recruitment plan and advanced discussions with OHCHR, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other United Nations agencies regarding substantive areas of coordination. It also produced regular reports and

analyses regarding issues affecting the peace process. Reporting has focused on the following key factors affecting the creation of an environment conducive to free and fair elections: weak or absent State institutions at the district level and below; the emergence of armed groups linked to regional identity-based grievances; and the effectiveness of efforts by civil society leaders and organizations to broaden and focus participation in the peace process.

32. Human rights and the rule of law remain the key areas of concern to national organizations, including the failure to address the deeply rooted problem of impunity and to strengthen the rule of law through improving public security arrangements. In addition to maintaining contact with national actors and OHCHR with regard to these issues, the Civil Affairs Office facilitated and promoted discussions among non-governmental organizations and donors regarding public security issues. The Office continued to coordinate with OHCHR on a series of district workshops and is preparing a detailed proposal for practical cooperation in the field once it is fully deployed.

33. UNMIN continued to press for the establishment of a credible independent national monitoring mechanism for the peace process, which it could assist in accordance with its mandate, as well as for the appointment of members of the National Human Rights Commission. It also engaged with the Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction regarding plans for local peace committees. In late June the Cabinet agreed in principle to establish a high-level monitoring body.

34. The Civil Affairs Office continued to monitor developments in the Terai region, reporting in particular on the Madhesi rights movement that had reached a peak in protest-related violence in March 2007. In May, a team from the Office conducted an extended field mission in the western Terai, which confirmed patterns of identity-based conflict that are distinct from those of the central and eastern Terai. In line with its future methodology, the Office held meetings with authorities including Chief District Officers, political parties and organizations and local minority groups. The Office took this opportunity to develop its future working methodology in the field, which will focus on district-by-district regional monitoring on key indicators — local governance, civil society and conflicts — and liaison with local authorities in coordination with OHCHR and regional offices of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

35. The Civil Affairs Office, which did not benefit from any substantial advance deployment, has engaged in recruitment and as of 6 July had a staff of four international and eight national Professional officers. The recruitment of regional civil affairs coordinators and United Nations Volunteers is progressing; upon their arrival they will participate in a 10-day training programme prior to deployment to the regions.

E. Political affairs

36. The Political Affairs Section, which is now fully staffed, closely tracked the progress of the peace process between CPN(M) and the Seven-Party Alliance in the interim Government, the ongoing discussions regarding creating a more inclusive electoral system for the Constituent Assembly and the increasing growth of communal, militant and criminal groups willing to use violence to advance their agendas. Notably, the challenges facing the peace process have grown increasingly

complex, and relations between CPN(M) and its Government partners are now only one part of a broader mosaic of relations and interactions that drive the political process and will determine its outcome.

37. My Special Representative, through his regular interaction with all concerned, has urged and encouraged unity among the eight parties. He further urged a concerted effort to address the grievances of traditionally marginalized groups, to urgently improve security conditions and to create an atmosphere providing adequate political space for all as a basis for the success of the Constituent Assembly election.

F. Public information and outreach

38. The Nepalese national media continued to be a major target of the public information work of UNMIN. Efforts focused in particular on raising awareness of the process for the second phase of the registration and verification of Maoist personnel in the cantonments and the Mission's concerns about establishing an atmosphere conducive to a free and fair Constituent Assembly election. The Mission's support of the peace process, and its related concerns, were prominently reported by national media throughout the period.

39. The international media continued to cover Nepal's peace process, mostly through print wire services, with occasional radio and television coverage. The Communications and Public Information Section provided regular briefings, facilitated interviews and supplied photographs and video footage to international media.

40. With public information staff at Mission headquarters gradually being deployed throughout the period, production of materials has increased. These include print materials aimed at supporting outreach work, as well as a series of short radio programmes. Production teams documented all phases of UNMIN work in the Maoist cantonments, including the verification process, mine action and cooperation with the Interim Task Force, as well as UNMIN cooperation with the Nepal Army. Electoral assistance activities were also documented. Production work began on an upgraded UNMIN website to replace the temporary site established with the support of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs at the start of the Mission.

41. Outreach programmes began in several regions, with a focus on districts in the Terai and on traditionally marginalized communities. Visits to cantonment sites have also taken place to plan activities there.

42. The Communications and Public Information Section worked closely with other United Nations country team public information teams during this period, and in particular with OHCHR and UNICEF, as well as with the United Nations Information Centre, to ensure a clear understanding of the mandate and work of UNMIN and the consistency of United Nations system messages By the end of June, the Section's team at Kathmandu headquarters was nearing its full staffing, and the first regional staff had been deployed to the midwestern region.

G. Safety and security

43. The overall level of staff safety and security has not changed. United Nations staff members in Nepal are advised to exercise a high degree of caution. Crime rates have increased, particularly in Kathmandu. There has been heightened tension in the Terai, including outbreaks of communal violence. The security situation remains unstable throughout the Terai districts, where law enforcement is ineffective and both criminal elements and potential spoilers of the peace process are present. Tensions throughout the country are expected to increase as the Constituent Assembly election draws closer.

44. *Bandhs* (strikes) and protests have been held regularly across the country. United Nations staff were not directly targeted in any protest or demonstration; however, they were occasionally prevented from carrying out their duties due to roadblocks in many areas. The UNMIN Safety and Security Section was understaffed until towards the end of this period, but continues to be well supported by Department of Safety and Security personnel in Kathmandu.

H. Administration and logistics

45. Progress has been made in the establishment of the Mission's administrative and logistical support infrastructure, thereby increasing the capability of the administration in the area of supporting the arms monitors, electoral advisers and other substantive components in the regions. Following the receipt of the Mission's fund allotments in early April, UNMIN has established its independent financial and procurement operations.

46. The Government of India donated 82 four-wheel vehicles, buses and pick-up trucks, 20 generators and five ambulances to the Government of Nepal for loan to UNMIN. Of these, all of the general-purpose vehicles, as well as the generators, have now been received; the delivery of the five ambulances is awaited. This generous contribution by India provided vital support to the Mission's efforts to expedite its deployment. UNMIN headquarters has now been established in the Birendra International Conference Centre, while work on the establishment of the five regional offices in Biratnagar, Pokhara, Kathmandu, Nepalgunj and Dhangadhi is ongoing. UNMIN has received its full complement of aviation assets, consisting of four helicopters and one fixed-wing aircraft.

47. UNMIN is awaiting delivery of some 98 additional passenger-type vehicles, of which 68 were ordered through the United Nations systems contract and are due in the Mission by 15 July. With their arrival and the receipt of about 300 tons of equipment from the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy, the Mission will have progressed well towards attaining full operational capability, including the ability to support the July deployment of electoral advisers in 28 districts across Nepal, as well as the five regional offices.

V. Human rights

48. The overall human rights situation continues to be worrying, with the main concerns linked to inadequate public security and law enforcement and to

unresolved issues of discrimination with regard to representation and inclusion in the political process. The enforcement of repeated *bandhs*, especially in the Terai, by a range of groups seriously affected freedom of movement, as some protests turned violent. Police responses ranged from passivity to excessive use of force. Security forces took steps to arrest more than 30 members of armed groups in the central and eastern regions of the Terai, but courts challenged the legality of some of the detentions. Abductions and killings by these groups continued. In June, OHCHR published a report on abuses by YCL since its re-emergence in December 2006, including "law enforcement activities" that amount to human rights abuses. The report noted that YCL abductions had increased in recent weeks. A member of the Madhesi People's Rights Forum remained missing after being abducted in Kathmandu on 15 June; OHCHR has not been able to confirm who was responsible for the abduction.

49. There were important developments in relation to accountability, which, if properly implemented in accordance with international standards, could have a positive impact on reducing impunity. These include a bill before the interim parliament to criminalize enforced disappearances. The Government also announced the formation, on 28 June, of a commission of inquiry to investigate conflict-related disappearances, but its credibility has already been called into question owing to the manner in which it was established. The Ministry for Peace and Reconstruction set up a task force to draft legislation to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. According to the Ministry, the draft, once finalized, will be made public for consultations. Nevertheless, OHCHR raised a number of significant concerns with regard to these measures that need to be addressed if the measures are to be in accordance with international human rights standards. At the same time, non-governmental organizations, victims and their relatives are facing continuing obstacles in their attempts to get police to investigate human rights violations.

50. OHCHR continued its series of workshops in districts around the country to bring civil society, police, political parties and local authorities together to discuss issues relating to human rights and the peace process. Some focused particularly on the question of discrimination and were attended by United Nations special experts on racism, discrimination and indigenous peoples, who visited Nepal during the last week of April. The experts particularly emphasized the importance of representation and inclusion in the peace process. The workshops repeatedly highlighted the need to build trust and dialogue at the local level in order to build conditions for a successful peace and electoral process.

VI. United Nations country team coordination

51. Since my previous report, UNMIN and the United Nations country team have advanced discussions on joint efforts in support of the peace process. The core element of the coordination efforts to date has been the sustained support to the country team in reorienting its programming for 2007 in the light of the joint strategic framework for supporting the peace process, agreed in April. While UNMIN has initiated a number of consultations with the Resident Coordinator's Office and the country team to guide the reorientation exercise, a joint mission was fielded by the United Nations Development Group Office, UNDP and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to review ways to strengthen recovery coordination. At the recommendation of that mission, and in consultation with my

Special Representative, the internal coordination mechanisms of the Country Team will be strengthened to better engage with the UNMIN coordination unit in supporting my Special Representative's responsibility to coordinate assistance from the United Nations system to the peace process.

52. Under the Mission's guidance, relevant agencies of the country team are gearing their support for the verification process in the cantonment sites. They have initiated the necessary consultations on enhancing health care for and around these sites, as well as on supporting the discharge of Maoists as a result of the verification process. In parallel with these activities, UNMIN continues to engage with other bilateral and multilateral donors in an effort to foster mutual understanding of, and enhance external support for, the peace process.

53. Enhancing United Nations and donor coordination efforts under the leadership of UNMIN, the United Nations peace fund for Nepal has, since my previous report, received supplementary contributions and pledges, bringing the total to approximately $3.8 million. In addition to the first project approved in April and currently under way, in support of mine action and improvised explosive devices disposal activities, as described in paragraph 23 above, additional projects have been approved to support the Maoist combatant verification process and training in demining for the Nepal Army. I thank the Member States which have contributed to the fund.

VII. Observations

54. Overall, I remain optimistic that the peace process in Nepal will achieve its goal and give the people of Nepal a well-deserved future of peace, stability and prosperity. But it is clear that the national political scene has become more complex and challenging in the past few months. Renewed and expanded efforts will have to be made to sustain the successful trajectory of the peace process. The parties and the people of Nepal have achieved so much that they cannot but take the peace process to its intended successful conclusion. The stakes are too high; complacency or differences over secondary issues cannot be allowed to threaten to deny the people of Nepal the realization of their ardent desire for sustainable peace.

55. The postponement of the election has had the effect of testing the unity of the eight parties and the level of trust among them. Failure to ensure a credible election within a realistic and well-planned period could have a much more serious impact on the unity of the eight parties and their ability to act and function in unison within the existing coalition.

56. UNMIN has advised and will continue to advise that if, as the interim Government has now formally decided, the Constituent Assembly election is to be held in November this year, considerable work needs to be done to meet that objective. Not only will additional commitments need to be forged, but the parties to the peace process will also need to improve their record of implementing commitments they have made already. My Special Representative advised that the political and security issues impeding this process and the related legislative, technical and logistical matters should have been addressed by the end of June or very soon thereafter. As noted above, a number of important steps have been taken since late May in that direction, and I am encouraged by that. This momentum needs to be maintained and accelerated. Among the key issues are conditions in the Maoist

cantonment sites; public security; the grievances of the Madhesi, Janajati and other underrepresented groups; and the post-election dispensation, including the future of the security sector.

57. The significance of the far-reaching process of democratization that Nepal is going through cannot be overstated. The successful holding of the Constituent Assembly election in a manner that meets the aspirations of the majority of the Nepalese people is the central element of this process. In the coming crucial months, as the country grapples with diverse operational and political challenges, the United Nations will continue to stand by the people of Nepal and the parties, who are striving to make the historic political transition a success. It is my intention to ensure that UNMIN and the wider United Nations system will position themselves to provide the utmost assistance to this process in a timely manner.

58. In conclusion, I would like to convey my sincere appreciation to the Security Council and Member States for their continued support to Nepal. I would also like to express my gratitude for the dedicated efforts of my Special Representative, Ian Martin, and of his staff and their partner organizations in Nepal.

United Nations S/2007/443

Security Council

Distr.: General
19 July 2007
English
Original: French

Letter dated 18 July 2007 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to request the Security Council to review the arms embargo in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1493 (2003) of 28 July 2003 and further strengthened in subsequent resolutions on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My Government wishes to underline the detrimental effect of the embargo on its ability to ensure, in an effective manner, national border security and the protection of the population. Accordingly, and in view of the new political situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo following the free, transparent and democratic elections organized with the assistance of the United Nations and the international community, it is of the opinion that the embargo should be modified.

My Government takes the view that clarification would be welcome in that regard and that the Security Council will be able to resolve any ambiguities.

Lastly, and also in view of the new political situation, my Government would be grateful if the Security Council could redefine the nature of the relations it is expected to maintain with, on the one hand, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, on the other hand, the Group of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1698 (2006) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My Government would be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Atoki **Ileka**
Ambassador

07-43242 (E) 200707 200707

United Nations S/2007/444

Security Council

Distr.: General
19 July 2007

Original: English

Letter dated 18 July 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

In my capacity as the representative of the current Chairman of the African Union, I have the honour to transmit herewith the communiqué issued by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union at its 80th meeting, held on 18 July 2007, in Addis Ababa, concerning the situation in Somalia (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Leslie Kojo **Christian**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations
Representative of the current Chairman of the African Union

07-43248 (E) 250 07

Annex to the letter dated 18 July 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: English and French]

Communiqué on the situation in Somalia issued by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union at its 80th meeting

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union, at its 80th meeting held on 18 July 2007, adopted the following decision on the situation in Somalia:

Council,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the situation in Somalia [PSC/PR/2(LXXX)];

2. *Strongly condemns* the threats and/or acts of violence and terrorism perpetrated by those elements seeking to undermine the political process. Council *calls* on all member States and partners of the African Union to stand firm on the side of Somalia's legitimate institutions in their efforts to fight violence and other acts aimed at undermining the political process. Council *calls on* all member States and the larger international community to cease immediately any further support for extremist elements or those who seek to block progress by violent means, and to support the ongoing efforts towards inclusive political dialogue;

3. *Condemns*, in the strongest terms, the attacks against the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and *recalls* that the Mission has no other objective than to support Somalia and its people in their efforts to achieve lasting peace and reconciliation;

4. *Appeals* to all the Somalis, both in the country and in the diaspora, to reject violence and to actively and constructively participate in the reconciliation process;

5. *Welcomes* the opening of the National Reconciliation Congress on 15 July 2007, in Mogadishu, as a significant step towards an all-inclusive and genuine reconciliation process, within the framework of the Transitional Federal Charter. In this respect, Council *requests* all the representatives of the Somali people participating in the Congress to bear their responsibilities and engage constructively in the process, and to seek peaceful solutions to the problems facing Somalia, within the framework of the Transitional Federal Charter;

6. *Urges* the Transitional Federal Institutions, in keeping with the objective of the National Reconciliation Congress, to spare no effort to reach out to all sections of the Somali population, with a view to facilitating the reconciliation process;

7. *Encourages* the Chairperson of the Commission, working closely with all stakeholders, including the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the League of Arab States, the United Nations and other African Union partners, to continue and intensify his efforts in support of the reconciliation process in Somalia;

8. *Appeals* to the member States and the larger international community to urgently provide the assistance needed to enhance the capacity of the Transitional Federal Institutions to enable them to effectively assume their responsibilities;

9. *Expresses its appreciation* for the steps taken by the Commission for the deployment of AMISOM, following the decision adopted at its 69th meeting held on 19 January 2007, Council *pays tribute* to the Ugandan troops for their efforts and the sacrifices made, as well as to the Ugandan Government for its commitment to the restoration of a lasting peace and reconciliation in Somalia;

10. *Expresses its gratitude* to the African Union member States and partners that have provided assistance for the deployment of AMISOM and its sustenance on the ground;

11. *Notes with concern* that the lack of adequate financial and logistical support has seriously affected the deployment of the troops pledged by member States for AMISOM, as well as the operations of the Mission on the ground. Council *reiterates* its urgent call to the African Union member States and partners to provide the necessary financial, logistical and technical support to make it possible for AMISOM to rapidly attain the authorized strength and to continue its operations in Somalia. Council *also urgently calls* on all member States to contribute troops and other personnel required for AMISOM;

12. *Stresses*, once again, the need for the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia that will take over AMISOM and support the long-term stabilization and post-conflict reconstruction of Somalia, and *reiterates its appeal* to the United Nations Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, to urgently take the necessary steps for the deployment of such an operation;

13. *Calls on* the United Nations, pending a decision by the Security Council authorizing the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia, to put in place, in consultation with the Commission of the African Union, a financial, logistical and technical support package for AMISOM, within the context of the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations;

14. *Appeals* to the international community to extend the necessary humanitarian assistance to the affected population in Somalia, and *demands* that all parties in Somalia facilitate the operations of the humanitarian agencies and NGOs;

15. *Decides* to extend the mandate of AMISOM for an additional period of six months;

16. *Requests* the Chairperson of the Commission to follow up on the implementation of this decision and to report to it regularly on the steps taken to this effect;

17. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.